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THE SHEPHERD/SHEEP MOTIF IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
" WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOHN 10

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
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June 1973

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Christological Question

In our discussion of the shepherd motif in the New Testament with special reference to John 10, we assumed that it has to do with Christology. We agree with Fuller that Christology is a "response to a particular history,"¹ and, in this case, to the work and words of Jesus. Naturally, as Fuller points out, Christology (i.e. the theology of Christ's person) should come before soteriology (i.e. the theology of the work of Christ), but this is the exact opposite of what we have in the New Testament. This is because, in the New Testament, men are first confronted with what Jesus did and said, and they responded to this in terms of Christology. In short, we might say that the response is kerygmatic in nature.

For example, the early preachers (especially Paul) would present the work and words of Jesus to the audience, and in consequence they would expect them to respond to it by declaring that "Jesus is the Christ." Therefore, we must realize that the whole of the New Testament literature is an attempt to communicate the experience, witnessed and encountered in relationship with Jesus, to the people of later

¹R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 15.

generations.

Therefore, we will not be surprised if some of the christological terms we have in the New Testament are different from Jesus' own understanding of himself. But it will not be true, as some scholars maintain, that we do not have a sort of continuity between Jesus' self-understanding and the church's christological interpretation of him.

The position we take in this study as we shall see, is in conjunction with this idea. Though there is a difference in the church's interpretation of Jesus' words and work and his own self-understanding, some sort of continuity exists. This is the basis for the focus and plan of the study and the entire discussion in the following pages.

We shall also establish the universality of the shepherd concept. There is no doubt in the point made by Quimby that, "this figure of the Good Shepherd falls short of the universal appeal inherent in the symbols of water and light."² To be sure, everybody knows water and light, but not everyone knows about shepherds. We shall apply the method of the early missionaries who shrewdly paraphrased the, "I am the bread of life" into "I am the banana of life" when few people knew about bread in Africa, or "I am the rice of life" in Japan and China. The way we shall do this will be to trace the shepherd concept back into antiquity, the Near Eastern world and similar non-Christian civilizations, and apply the overall concept into the contemporary thought,

²Chester W. Quimby, *John the Universal Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 152.

the political and social, and the life of the church. This will be clearer as we proceed with the plan of the study and the following substantive chapters.

The Focus of This Study

The focus of this study reflects our own understanding of theological principles. A careful study of the pages that follow will reveal that we have three categories of expression or communication which we believe are necessary for the proper understanding, not only of the New Testament but of the whole Bible. The three categories are critical, theological and existential considerations. These three are uniquely combined in this study.

It is beneficial to make a critical study of the Bible. This will enable us to understand the environment in which Jesus taught and worked, the prevailing conditions under which the apostles preached, and the influence, if any, these conditions have on our Gospel sources. In short, we will understand the New Testament and, for that matter, the whole Bible better if we know its background.

We know that the writers of the New Testament were not writing a strictly biographical account of the life of Jesus and the apostles or of the events that happened. Rather the writers were attempting to convey some important truths to us. This can only be done in theological and mythological languages. Even today we do not have adequate language to explain or express some of the phenomena around us. We have to know then the theological implications of the different state-

ments and claims we have in the New Testament. It is worth noting, at the same time, that the interpretation (i.e. the theology) does not necessarily mean distortion of facts, especially as it relates to the Gospel of John and the christological affirmations.

Morris makes the point that indeed the absence of interpretation may sometimes mean distortion. He gives this example, that one might say with truth, "Nicholas Ridley was executed." But if this is all that one says, a wrong impression may be conveyed. It means more to say, "Bishop Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake," and still more to say, "Bishop Nicholas Ridley was martyred."³ The last statement obviously carries a fuller meaning than the previous two. It may, of course, be disputed. There is a parallel here with the New Testament and particularly John's Gospel.

The necessary format of our thesis makes it also compulsory for us, apart from other considerations, to have part of the focus of our study on practice in a particular situation. While it is beneficial to make a critical analysis, to understand the theological import of the New Testament, it becomes more alive when the two categories above are related to the contemporary situation, the 20th century situation. So that our investigation will not end in a mere critical study or theological abstraction, it will be related to the actual life of the modern church. To be sure, part of the New Testament came into being

³Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 41.

for this very purpose, the interest of the contemporary church of the time of the writers. But it is equally if not more relevant for us today.

The Limitations of This Study

It is necessary to impose certain limitations in the course of our investigation. Even though we consider the shepherd motif as part and parcel of the christological inquiries, yet for expediency, we are unable to enter into the christological problem. The problem is so complex that it would demand another independent study.

The shepherd motif in the New Testament is more involving and comprehensive than it appears on the surface. Therefore, we are unable to make an exhaustive discussion of the subject. But sufficient treatment of the subject in the following pages will doubtlessly increase our knowledge and understanding of this very important concept in the Bible.

No attempt is made, except occasional references, to go into the problems of authorship, date and place of writing of John's Gospel. Along with this limitation, certain things are assumed. In the treatment of the shepherd motif, we assume that John is not a "theological Gospel" as such and that even though it may be said that the writer is more interested in theology than the Synoptic writers, he has a source of his own. Therefore, it is not impossible that the parable of the good shepherd (not necessarily with all the details) goes back to Jesus of Nazareth. It is also assumed that the writer was a Palestinian Jew,

who, for example, was familiar perhaps with the contrast between the "good" and the "bad" shepherds in Ezekiel 34 or in Jewish tradition at least. These assumptions will reflect upon many statements and expressions in the pages that follow.

The Plan of This Study

What gives me the incentive to write on a subject like the present one partly determines the plan followed in this study. I owe my initial incentive to the study of John's Gospel and the book of Revelation under Professor Titus. This may be regarded as the remote cause for embarking upon this work. But the recent cause for my interest lies in the fact that this area of study, this important concept, is given very little treatment in the commentaries and the books on John. To be sure, one does not find it in most books on New Testament Christology. I believe that this attempt will be an eye-opener to the understanding of this important christological concept in the New Testament.

Chapter II will deal with a survey of the background to the concept of the shepherd motif. The survey, even though will not be exhaustive, is an attempt, not only to trace the concept to the Old Testament, but also to non-Christian and Eastern worlds. In the Old Testament section of it, we shall see how this concept is depicted not only in Yahweh, but in the kings, the prophets and the other leaders.

Chapter III proceeds to trace a summary survey of the concept in the whole of the New Testament. The Synoptic Gospels are the

starting point, especially the famous parable of the lost sheep. Here it will be shown that not only Jesus, as the "representative" of God, is depicted as the shepherd, but also the leaders of the Apostolic Church, and the congregation always regarded as the flock.

Chapter IV, based on John 10, will be the main focus of our attention and investigation. It will not only deal with the parable as such, but an attempt will be made to relate the concept to the life and death of Jesus. This chapter will go further in the investigation to add a new dimension to the concept, almost entirely ignored in the treatment of the shepherd motif in the past studies. This is the idea of the imitation of God/Jesus. The exegesis of John 10 will be a necessary integral part of the chapter because we believe that the Biblical texts themselves should be allowed to speak for themselves. There is value, no doubt in the secondary sources, and this is why part of Chapter III will deal with that aspect. But we strongly believe that the text itself should not be ignored, and to be sure it is the primary source.

Chapter V will be an attempt to relate the whole study to the contemporary church of the 20th century. The starting point here will be how and why the concept of the shepherd persisted and survived in the Christian catacomb art. We have suggested that even though the shepherd parable may probably go back to Jesus, it was nevertheless written by the Evangelist in the interest of the church of his time. This is an opportunity to relate this to the life and ministry of the present day church.

Chapter VI will be the concluding chapter of the study. No new ideas are expected to be introduced, but an attempt will be made to bring together the essential elements discussed in the earlier chapters. For example, someone who is even in a hurry to read this work and is only able to read this chapter will be able to benefit from it, however little. With these introductory statements on focus, limitations and plan of the study, we will now proceed to Chapter II in the pursuance of our investigation.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Non-Christian Idea of a Shepherd/God Figure in the Eastern World

The lofty ideas we have of the shepherd/sheep relationship in both the Old and New Testaments did not come out of the blue. Like so many concepts in the Bible, the origin has to be traced back, not only to the Old Testament or the early church, but much more into antiquity, and this will be our starting point. As we go on in our investigation on the main thesis, however, we shall have cause to observe that the ideas are, so to say, sophisticatedly developed in either the Old or New Testament. The justification for this may be based on what we may call enlightened revelation of God in the Old Testament and the life and work of Jesus in the New Testament.

Already in a Sumerian royal inscription, "the king is described as the shepherd appointed by deity."¹ In Babylonian and Assyrian, *rē'û* ("Shepherd") is a common epithet for rulers, and the verb *rē'û* ("to pasture") is a common figure of speech for "to rule."

Also, the artistic representation of the Good Shepherd found in the early church did not come suddenly. We shall have an occasion

¹Joachim Jeremias, "ποιμήν, ἀρχιποίμην, ποιμαίνω, ποίμνη, ποίμνιον," in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), VI, 486.

later to speak briefly on the Christian catacombs, but suffice it to say here that the early Christians did not invent it. For example, "Why should Christ as a shepherd be shown continually as a beardless youth?"² Wright suggests that the answer seems to lie in the fact that the Christians were not inventing a new artistic motif. Rather, it seems that when they began to portray "their Christ as a Good Shepherd, they were merely appropriating a type of figure which had long been familiar in the art of Greeks and Romans."³ Some of the representations of the Good Shepherd are practically identical with those of the pagan Orpheus, even to the inclusion of his lyre. It will be remembered that in Greek mythology, "Orpheus too, was a Shepherd who could charm the beasts and the birds with the music of his lyre."⁴

But even more interesting is a comparison with the Greek god Hermes, who was especially popular in Arcadia, a district which was the pasture-ground of Greece. Among other things, Hermes was thought by the Greeks to be the herdsman or lord of the flocks, which he led to the sweet waters assisted by the shepherd's crook, and bore the weak or tired ram or lamb upon his shoulders. In fact, one of the titles given to him was the Ram-bearer, and he was occasionally portrayed by Greek artists as carrying a ram over his shoulders in exactly the same manner as did the Good Shepherd in the Early Christian art. In the

²G. Ernest Wright, "The Good Shepherd," *Biblical Archaeologist*, II (December 1939), 46.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

opinion of many scholars therefore, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that in the early days of the new Christian art, the artists turned to an old traditional pagan type, and the charming conception of the shepherd Hermes lent itself admirably to the illustration of the good shepherd of the New Testament parable.

The idea of the "ideal" shepherd is not only traceable in Greek mythologies but also in the discussions of the Greek philosophers. In Plato,⁵ the rulers are called shepherd of the πόλις. They must see to the well-being of their subjects as shepherds do to that of their animals. In the debate on justice and injustice, Socrates had to correct the wrong notion of Thrasymachus concerning the role of the shepherd which is synonymous with that of the ruler or the "ideal" ruler. In the argument, Thrasymachus, when comparing the role of the shepherd with that of the ruler, implies that the shepherd, like rulers, are considering the good of the cattle, and fatten and tend them with the view to satisfy their own good or the good of their masters.

Socrates, in a counter argument and in answer to Thrasymachus, corrected the wrong application the latter made of the shepherd in relation to the ruler. Socrates, among other things, said,

The art of the shepherd surely is concerned with nothing else than how to provide what is best for that over which it is set, since its own affairs, its own best estate, are surely sufficiently provided for so long as it in nowise fails of being the shepherd's art. And in like manner I suppose that we just now were constrained to acknowledge that every form of rule in so far as it is rule

⁵Plato, *The Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), I, 65f.

considers what is best for nothing else than that which is governed and cared for by it, alike in political and private rule. . . .⁶

Another question is whether or not the idea originated even with the Greeks. In this connection, a French archaeologist by the name of Parrot⁷ has recently called attention to the large number of similar figures described above in the Ancient Orient, especially in Syria and Mesopotamia.⁸ The figures shown here are self-evident of the point in question. Figure (a) is a relief from Khorsabad, a city in ancient Assyria. Its date is the eighth century B.C., sometime before the earliest Hermes figures. Here we have an Assyrian gentleman carrying a gazelle over his shoulders. Figure (b) is another relief. This one was found at ancient Samal in North Syria, dating after 1000 B.C., also another man carrying a gazelle on his shoulders.

Parrot then presents these two figures as typical of a large number which have been found in these religions. We see immediately the similarity or comparison between Hermes the Ram-bearer, the Good Shepherd, and the reliefs.

However, it is not clear, and we have no evidence yet to know whether or not many of the figures of the ancient Near East are good shepherds as such, since worshipers would probably carry their lambs or sheep on their shoulders to the altar for sacrifice. But it would

⁶*Ibid.*, I, 75.

⁷Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 47.



Reliefs from Khorsabad, Assyria (a)*

Samal, Syria (b)

*From Wright, *ibid.*, p. 47.

appear that the idea of the good shepherd started from the ancient Near East, through Greece, and into early Christian art.

In Babylonia, however, the "shepherd" of his people is first found in the Old Sumerian ruler Lugal-Zaggisi⁹ "who prayed heaven that it might never revoke the fair destiny which it had decreed for him, and that he might always be the shepherd at the head of the flock,"¹⁰ Gudea was "chosen as the true shepherd of the land"¹¹ and, thenceforward, this title was freely assumed by kings not only of Babylon but of Assyria as well. There are phrases which emphasize the authority of the shepherd over his charges. Warad-Sin of Larsa prayed for "a staff to subdue the people"¹² and "a staff which makes the loyal men walk with one step"¹³ is claimed as a gift of God to the King Ishme-Dagan of Isin. In the other aspect, there are many allusions to the benign care of the shepherd. A blessing addressed to the King Lipit-Ishtar prays that he may guide "the black-headed people as a ewe does her lambs."¹⁴ The second part of this chapter will deal with the many familiar and touching similes in the Old Testament.

It will be necessary to bring out specific examples from antiquity based on ancient Egypt. We shall therefore briefly observe how the Egyptians regarded the god or gods and kings as good shepherds.

⁹Jeremias, *op. cit.*, VI, 486.

¹⁰C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 38.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

In Egypt, we see clearly how God is depicted as the shepherd, usually in hymns and by sages. Sometimes the idea is introduced in a sociological perspective and, at another time, in a religious perspective.

An example of this may be noted in the hymn of the twin brothers named Seth and Horus. They were architects at Thebes in the reign of Amenhotep III (1412-1375 B.C.).¹⁵ They erected stelae praising Amon, who was at this time regarded as the universal god.

When thou crossest the sky, all faces behold thee, but when thou departest, thou art hidden from their face. . . . The fashioner of that which the soil produces . . . a mother of profit to gods and men; a patient craft man, greatly wearying (himself) as their maker, . . . valiant herdsman, driving his cattle, their refuge and maker of their living.¹⁶

Although the word "shepherd" is not used in this particular hymn, there is no doubt that "herdsman" carries exactly the same notion.

In another set of hymns dating from the late nineteenth B.C. or the Twentieth Dynasty, Amon is referred to in language similar to that in John 10: "He is the good shepherd: Thou art valiant as a herdsman tending them forever and ever. . . . Their hearts turn about to thee, good at all times. Everybody lives through the sight of thee."¹⁷

From the brief survey discussed above, we see how the idea of God as the herdsman or shepherd developed. We shall pass on briefly to

¹⁵See John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 211.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 229.

discuss how the same idea was related to kings. This is necessary, because god and king are two conceptions so nearly coupled in the oriental mind that sometimes the distinction is blurred.

The question whether kings actually took "shepherds" or "good shepherds" as titles is disputed. But, as Gadd observes, the idea, if not the title, originated from the intent "that the people should stick to their tasks and be undisturbed."¹⁸ As guarantors of this, the kings were accustomed to proclaim themselves "shepherds" "combining the ideas of keeping sheep as an industry gainful to the god, and tending them for their own good."¹⁹ This is indeed an excellent term for the kingship understood as a balance and channel between gods and men. Gadd says that in Egypt, the actual title "was scarcely used,"²⁰ but we shall discuss later about the general conception of this motif in connection with the function of the kings.

We pointed out earlier the observation of Gadd that the shepherd as a title was scarcely used in Egypt. This is not our interest here, but simply to point out that the idea was evidently present in ancient Egypt. From the early middle kingdom in Egypt (about 2050-1800 B.C.) the image of the king as the shepherd of his subjects is a favorite one in literature; he is, for example, a "herd for all the people" or "the herd who watches over his subjects."²¹ From the

¹⁸Gadd, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹For this reason, e.g. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 125, entitles the chapter on the 11th and 12th dynasties, "The King as the Good Shepherd."

utterances of the sages, we observe how the kings, or at least some of them, failed to perform their role as shepherds. This is boldly brought out by "prophet" Ipu-wer in blaming the pharaoh of his day for anarchy in Egypt. "The king should be the herdsman of his people, keeping them alive and well," and yet, charged Ipu-wer, facing the god-king upon the throne, "his rule only set a pattern of death. If three men go along a road, they are found to be two men: it is the greater number that kills the lesser. Does then the herdsman love death (that is, for his herds)?"²²

Ipu-wer also described positively, in what we may call his admonition, the good ruler as a conscientious shepherd who looked after his flocks with care: "It shall come to pass that he brings coolness to the heart. Though his herds may be small, still he has spent the day caring for them."²³

Here Ipu-wer foresaw an ideal day when the ideal ruler who once ruled Egypt as the Sun-god Re, would rule Egypt. He contrasts that day with iniquitous reign under which the land now suffers. He continues in this manner, "It is said he is the shepherd of all men. There is no evil in his heart. When his herd are few, he passes the day to gather them together, their hearts being fevered."²⁴ This

²²*Ibid.*, p. 115f.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁴J. H. Breasted, *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1912), p. 211.

probably means thirsty, perhaps a symbol for afflicted. While there is no unquestionably predictive element in this message, it is a picture of the ideal sovereign, the righteous ruler with "no evil in his heart" who goes about like a "shepherd" gathering his reduced and thirsty herds. Such a righteous reign, like that of David, has been, and may be again.

We might add in passing that this of course is Messianism nearly fifteen hundred years before its appearance among the Hebrews. Breasted²⁵ reminds us that Lange first called attention to the Messianic character of this passage. His interpretation, however, was that the passage definitely predicts the coming of the Messianic King. This is not a place to debate the merits and demerits of this interpretation.

However, the concept of the good shepherd rather than the distant and lordly owner of the flocks shifted the idea of kingship in ancient Egypt from possession of a right to responsibility as a duty. This is a long distance from the Old Kingdom conception of a sublime being, all wise and all-powerful, far beyond the reach of ordinary man. "Spending the day" in caring for the flock emphasizes the heavy burden of kingship and necessity for being constantly alert. Wilson observes that this is unlike the Fourth Dynasty²⁶ when the dogma of sublimated divinity of the pharaoh was a characteristic. In the Middle Kingdom, 11th and 12th dynasties, the King was thought as a watchful Shepherd

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 212.

²⁶Cf. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 132f.

or as the lonely being whose conscience looked after the nation. No wonder then that during this time in ancient Egypt, the rulers were expected to exhibit a quality of ma'at (justice). The rulers responded by taking formal throne names which expressed their desire and obligation to render ma'at to men and gods. This was another formulation of the concept of the good shepherd.

The Shepherd/Sheep Relationship in the Old Testament and Related Literature

In the Old Testament, we have two main streams of the idea of the shepherd/sheep relationship. The first is the professional sheep-keeping of the shepherd. The second one seems to spring out from the first, namely the spiritualization of the idea. We are mostly concerned with the second aspect, and will be considered in three basic categories: God as the Shepherd, the king as the shepherd, and the prophets and leaders as the shepherds.

However, we may briefly summarize the first aspect of the idea since it has a far-reaching influence and implication on the second with which as stated above, we are mostly concerned, not only in this section of our investigation, but on the main subject of our thesis, with the spiritualization of the shepherd/sheep relationship, otherwise called the theology of the idea of the Shepherd in the Bible.

The care of the sheep is a subject of frequent allusion in the scripture. The sheep are exposed to the vicissitudes of weather, winter and summer, frost and drought, in the immense treeless plains

where they are mostly raised. Thus Jacob could say about his care of Laban's flock, "Thus I was, by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sheep fled from my eyes" (Gen. 31:40). Not only this, but also to the attacks of beasts and robbers (Gen. 31:39; I Sam. 17:34; cf. John 10:10-11).

The Shepherd *leads, not drives* them to pasture and water (Ps. 23; 77:20; 78:52; 80:1), and protects them at the risk of his life (cf. John 10:15). To keep them from the cold, rain and beasts, he collects them in caves (I Sam. 24:3) or enclosures built of rough stones (Num. 32:16; Judg. 5:16; Zeph. 2:6; cf. John 10:1). Abraham Rihbany, who is a native of Syria, writes about one Yusuf Balua',²⁷ giving him as an example of how the shepherds in Syria and in the entire East take care of their sheep.

The flocks are kept in the 'lowlands' until after the 'time of birth,' which comes in March; then they are led up into the mountains. It was during that blessed time of birth, and while with Yusuf, that I first beheld the original of that infinitely tender picture which is drawn in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, the eleventh verse, and which is also Christ's most appealing picture. 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,' says the prophet; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young.'²⁸

The text is very effectively improved by the marginal note which says, "and shall gently lead those that give suck." Rihbany says that it was that which Yusuf Balua' was doing when he happened to be with him.

²⁷ Abraham M. Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (New York: Riverside Press, 1916), p. 305.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

Rihbany continues:

His roughly hewn figure stands now before me, with three newly born lambs held close to his bosom, and their wilted heads resting on his massive arm. He walked gently before the anxious, slowly moving mothers, which came close behind him, emitting low, humming sounds, through which Nature poured out her compassionate heart. 'Let me carry one of them,' I begged Yusuf. 'No, my boy, not the helpless ones,' answered the tender friend. 'They need the shepherd's care now. Besides, the mothers don't know you and they would fear.'²⁹

Rihbany's personal reflection here opens our eyes first into the actual care given to the sheep by the shepherds and the consequent spiritualization of the concept both in the Old and the New Testaments.

It is one of the most interesting spectacles to see a number of flocks of thirty sheep brought by their several shepherds to be watered at a fountain. This scene is common both in Palestine and in the Northern part of Nigeria where all our cattle are reared. It was such a scene that greeted Jacob's eyes when he fell in love with Rachel at first sight (Gen. 29:10-11). Moses also met his wife and her sisters at the watering troughs (Ex. 2:16-21). The shepherd often carries the smaller lambs in his bosom or under his arm as in the case of Yusuf mentioned above, or in the folds of his cloak (Isa. 40:11). Dogs are indispensable to shepherds (Job 30:1). They protect the flock from wild animals and robbers. Rihbany calls this the "climax of the shepherd figure in the Gospel and Psalms,"³⁰ namely, the shepherd's interposing with his own life between the flock and the wolf. The wolf,

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 307.

³⁰*Ibid.*

the hyena, and the leopard are the flock's most formidable foes.

Rihbany remembered Yusuf fighting many battles with those ferocious beasts, but "never lost a hoof to them in all those encounters."³¹ He said that on more than one occasion, Yusuf followed the hyena to his lair, and, by his characteristic howling, flinging his deadly stones with his sling, and striking with his heavy staff on the rocks, compelled the beast to abandon his prey. "Whether the unfortunate sheep was yet alive or whether it had died, Yusuf, as a good and faithful shepherd, always carried it back to the fold."³²

Does not the prophet Amos assure Israel of their Shepherd's infinite care for them in an allusion to the faithful seeking by the earthly shepherd for even a fragment of his lost sheep? "Thus saith the Lord," cries Amos; 'As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued . . .'" (Amos 3:12). No animal mentioned in the scripture compares in symbolic interest and importance with the sheep. It is alluded to about five hundred times. In the spiritualization aspect of it, the people of God become His sheep (Ps. 95:7; 100:3; cf. Jn. 21:15-17), and his ministers pastors, that is, shepherds (Jer. 23:1; cf. Eph. 4:11; Jn. 21:15ff).

To this care and devotion of the shepherd, Rihbany also alludes when he writes about Yusuf:

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

When I think of that deep, rocky gorge where Yusuf wintered with his flock, and the many similar valleys which the Syrian shepherds have to traverse daily; when I think of the wild beasts they have to fight, of the scars they bear on their bodies as marks of their unreserved and boundless devotion to their flock, I realize very clearly the depth of the Psalmist's faith when he said, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.'³³

We may now consider the three categories of the shepherd/sheep relationship mentioned earlier: God, King, and prophets/leaders as shepherds.

God as Shepherd

In the Old Testament, the description and designation of Yahweh as the Shepherd are very ancient tradition. For example, " . . . His arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel" (Gen. 49:24). In the Exodus/Deuteronomy stories, the word shepherd is not used for Yahweh, but the whole picture is one of a shepherd leading the flock. A few instances where the words "lead" and "guide" are used may be noted. "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not *lead* them by way of the land of the Philistines . . ." (Ex. 13:17). "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud *to lead* them along the way . . ." (Ex. 13:21). "Thou hast *led* in thy steadfast love the people whom thou has redeemed, thou hast *guided* them by thy strength to thy holy abode" (Ex. 15:13; cf. 23:20). We can compare also Numbers 27:16-17, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall *lead* them out and bring them in; that the

³³*Ibid.*, p. 309.

congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd." The implication here is that someone may assist Moses and Yahweh in leading the people as a shepherd leads his sheep. "And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where the Lord will *lead* you away" (Deut. 28:37).

On the whole, references to Yahweh as the Shepherd are few. But the concept developed later from general thought of Yahweh leading and guiding the people into the actual Shepherd metaphor, shepherding His flock. Because the patriarchal civilization and that of Israel until well after the conquest of Palestine was largely pastoral, the imagery of shepherding is frequent in the Bible. Even when agriculture became dominant in Israel, "there remained a nostalgia for the pastoral."³⁴ Yahweh might be pictured as the tender of the vine and the planter of the seed, but He remained more familiarly the shepherd of the flock (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23; 78:52-53). This may be seen from the great number of passages which use the shepherd vocabulary for Yahweh. God becomes therefore the "Shepherd" who goes before His flock (Ps. 68:7), who guides it (Ps. 23:3; 78:52), who leads it to pastures (Jer. 50:19), and to places where it may rest by the waters (Ps. 23:2; Isa. 40:11; Ps. 80:1), who protects it with His staff (Ps. 23:4), who whistles to the dispersed and gathers them (Judg. 5:16; Isa. 56:8), who carries the lambs in His bosom and leads the mother-sheep (Isa. 40:11).

³⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), I, 397.

We may note however, that the references are not spread evenly over the whole of the Old Testament. We have earlier referred to the shepherd terms in Exodus/Deuteronomy stories (to lead, to guide, to go before), but in general it is hard to determine whether there is any conscious feeling for the shepherd metaphor. More commonly, and with details which show how vital the concept is, the figure of speech, what we earlier called spiritualization of the concept, is found in the Psalter (Ps. 23:1-4; 28:9; cf. 68:7; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52f.; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; cf. 121:4), and in the consoling prophecy of the Exile (Jer. 23:3; 31:10; 50:19; Ezek. 34:11-22; Isa. 40:10f.; 49:9f.; Mic. 4:6-8; 7:14). The content of the metaphor is more clearly developed in the prophecy of the Exile than in any other place apart from Ps. 23. Ezekiel (37:24ff.), looking to Israel's reconstitution, could declare, "They shall all have one shepherd . . . They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt . . . I will make a covenant of peace with them . . . ; and I will bless them." The Second Isaiah, announcing that very same redemptive event, and seeing Yahweh in the role of a shepherd, said, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:11). More than almost any other expression, it is well fitted to bring out in all this the fact that Israel is sheltered in God.

The King as A Shepherd

We must agree with Jeremias³⁵ in his observation that

³⁵Jeremias, *op. cit.*, VI, 488.

surprisingly enough there is no single instance in the Old Testament of "Shepherd" ever being used in Israel as a title for the ruling king. It is quite clearly said of David that he "tends" Israel (II Sam 5:2 par.; I Chr. 21:2; Ps. 78:71f.) and the people are called by him a flock (II Sam. 24:17 par.; I Chr. 21:17), but the royal title "Shepherd" does not occur. But as in ancient Egypt, where it is also disputed whether kings took "shepherd" as title, the motif is evidently present. At least, it is clear in a couple of instances, even though the title refers to the future Messianic Son of David. In the following instances, the Messianic King is depicted as the Shepherd.

Because the shepherds have refused to become unfaithful, Yahweh will visit them (Jer. 2:8 where the Hebrew reads "shepherds" instead of "rulers" in the Revised Standard Version: 23:2; Ezek. 34:1-10). "Or I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I Yahweh will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Yahweh, promised it." (Ezek. 34:23f.) We have a similar idea in Micah 5:3 where it is stated that the ruler of Israel from Bethlehem, the town of David, will feed the people in the power of the Lord. Israel will become one people (Ezek. 37:22) under one shepherd (Ezek. 37:24).

As we pointed out in the first part of this chapter, the shepherd imagery became a figurative term for the rulers, not only of God's people, but a usage common throughout the ancient Near East. Impious kings were scathingly denounced as wicked shepherds (I Kings 22:17; Jer. 10:21; 23:1-2). Even Cyrus, a foreign and pagan king, was

characterized as Yahweh's shepherd in Isa. 44:28, " . . . Cyrus, he is my shepherd." To be sure, it is because in the Old Testament, God is thought of as a King, that he is correspondingly referred to as the Shepherd. For this reason, God must find a man to lead the people, lest they become "like sheep who have no shepherd" (Num. 27:17). If faithful Israel repents, God will give her shepherds after his own heart, who will feed her with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15). So that in the main, the patriarchs, Moses, David and others are metaphorically shepherds.

However, what is not found clearly in the Old Testament is the willingness of the shepherd dying for the sheep, a motif that will be dealt with in detail in Chapter IV. B. D. Napier observes this lack or unclarity in the Old Testament when he said, "Prophetic faith can conceive of Israel or the Servant of Yahweh dying on behalf of the cause of the knowledge and reign of God in the world, but not God Himself nor the Son of God. Prophetic allegory never sees the shepherd dying for his sheep."³⁶ On the other hand, Jeremias sees the suffering motif of the shepherd in the Old Testament differently. For him, "at the end of the Old Testament Shepherd sayings there stands an intimation of the Shepherd who suffers death according to God's will and who thereby brings about the decisive turn."³⁷ We shall have an occasion to discuss this further in the New Testament context in the Gospel of John on the

³⁶B. D. Napier, "Sheep," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, 316.

³⁷Jeremias, *op. cit.*, VI, 488.

theme of the relationship between Jesus as the Shepherd and His death.

The Prophets/Leaders as "Shepherds"

Not only God and kings are conceived and regarded as "shepherds," but also the prophets, judges and military leaders of Israel. They too, like the kings can either fail or succeed in their duty of shepherding the people. We have a glaring example of this in the oracle of Ezekiel in Chapter 34. As Jeremiah was earlier against the false prophets, so Ezekiel was against the "bad shepherds," who obviously were among the prophets and leaders of the people (Ezek. 34:2, 8, 9, 10). In II Sam. 7:7 par., I Chr. 17:6, the judges were specifically referred to as shepherds. "In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people . . . ?" (See Jer. 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 22:22; 23:1-4; 25:34-36; 50:6; cf. Isa. 56:11; 63:11.) In all these passages and others where the prophets and leaders were blamed for their neglect of the sheep or flock (meaning the people), we see clearly that they, too, were conceived and regarded as shepherds; of course, they may turn out to be good or bad shepherds of the people (see again Zech. 10:1-3; 11:15-17; 13:7; Mic. 5:5; Nah. 3:18; etc.). A good concordance reveals how often in the oracles of the prophets, many of their colleagues and similar leaders were blamed for lack of shepherding the people.

Later in Judaism, it is interesting to see how many different interpretations were given to the intent that a prophet had to be

tested in order to ascertain whether or not he will be able to be the shepherd of the people. For example, different interpretations were given in the choice of Yahweh making Moses and David the shepherds of the people.

Thus with God; though He seems to have removed His presence from the Temple, yet 'His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men.' And whom does he try? The righteous, as it says: 'The Lord trieth the righteous.' By what does He try him? By tending flocks. He tried David through sheep and found him to be a good shepherd, as it is said: 'He chose David also His servant and took him from the sheep folds.' Why 'from the sheep folds, . . .'? Because he used to stop the bigger sheep from going out before the smaller ones, and bring smaller ones out first, so that they should gaze upon the tender grass, and afterwards he allowed the old sheep to feed from the ordinary grass, and lastly, he brought forth the young, lusty sheep to eat the tougher grass. Whereupon God said: 'He who knows how to look after sheep, bestowing upon each the care it deserves, shall come and tend my people' as it says. From following the ewes that give such He brought him to be shepherd over Jacob His people.³⁸

Also, Moses was said to have been tested by God through sheep.

Our Rabbis said that when Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was tending the flock of Jethro in the wilderness, a little kid escaped from him. He ran after it until it reached a shady place. When it reached the shady place, there appeared to view a pool of water and the kid stopped to drink. When Moses approached it, he said: 'I did not know that you ran away because of thirst; you must be weary.' So he placed the kid on his shoulder and walked away. Thereupon God said: 'Because thou hast mercy in leading the flock of a mortal, thou wilt assuredly tend my flock Israel.'³⁹

However, we may note in passing that one of the later interesting developments in the shepherd motif in later Judaism is what we may call negative attitude towards the shepherd. For instance in a

³⁸S. M. Lehrman, *Exodus* (London: Soncino Press, 1939), pp. 48-49.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Rabbinic list of thieving and cheating occupations, we find that of the shepherd.⁴⁰ This classification of herds as notorious robbers and cheats means that like the publicans and tax-gatherers, they were deprived of civil rights, that is, they could not fulfill a judicial office or be admitted in court as witnesses. This discrimination against shepherds on the part of Pharisaic Rabbism is best understood if one realizes that the independence of the shepherd, who during the summer was on the move with the flock for months at a time with no supervision, constituted a serious temptation to steal some of the increase of the flock. It is worth noting that "to buy wool, milk, or a kid from a shepherd was forbidden on the assumption that it would be stolen property."⁴¹ Shepherds were also accused of pasturing their flocks on the lands of others. Rabbi Jose ben Chanina, therefore asked in amazement how "in view of the despicable nature of shepherds one is to explain the fact that God is called 'my Shepherd' in Ps. 23:1"?⁴²

But in passing, we may note that this is not completely strange. For example, the serpent is used for different, sometimes contradictory motifs. In Gen. 3:1f., it is the agent of deceit and sin. Through its cunning devices, Adam and Eve sinned and so brought sin and misery into the world. In Num. 21:6f., it is both the instrument of destruction and salvation. God sent the serpent to punish the Israelites because of their sin, at the same time, God commanded Moses to make a bronze

⁴⁰Jeremias, *op. cit.*, VI, 488-489.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, VI, 489.

⁴²*Ibid.*

serpent and set it on a pole; "and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." Again in John 3:14, Jesus himself refers to the occasion of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness to refer to His "lifting up." "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him may have eternal life." Conversely the same serpent is referred to as "that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan" in Revelation 20:2. As we find negative and positive attitudes towards the serpent, so do we find the same attitude towards the shepherds in later Judaism.

Though shepherds were despised in everyday life, nevertheless even in later Judaism itself, surely on the basis of the statements in the Old Testaments, not only God was described as the shepherd of Israel, who led the people, his flock out of Egypt, but also prophets and kings as in the example of Moses and David given above. It will appear then that kindly sayings about shepherds are hardly found except in relation to Biblical texts. And for this reason, Moses and David in particular are extolled as faithful shepherds.

Philo, on the other hand, draws together the Biblical and Hellenistic themes. Thus (in the manner of Ex. R. above) he argues that Moses was first trained and tested as a shepherd of sheep before being allowed to act as shepherd of God's people, since shepherding is the best preparation for rulership.

After the marriage, Moses took charge of the sheep and tended them, thus receiving his first lesson in command of others; for the shepherd's business is a training-ground and a preliminary exercise in kingship for one who is destined to command the herd of mankind, the most civilized of herds, just as also hunting is for war-like natures, since those who are trained to general-

ship practice themselves first in the chase. And thus unreasoning animals are made to subserve as material where with to gain practice in government in the emergencies of both peace and war; for the chase of wild animals is a drilling-ground for the general in fighting the enemy, and the care and supervision of tame animals is a schooling for the King dealing with his subjects, and therefore Kings are called 'shepherds of their people, . . .'. And my opinion, based not on the opinions of the multitude but on my own inquiry into the truth of the matter, is that the only perfect king (let him laugh who will) is the one who is skilled in the knowledge of shepherding, one who has been trained by management of the inferior creatures to manage the superior. For initiation in the lesser mysteries must precede initiation in the greater.⁴³

From our summary investigation contained in this chapter, we have sufficient background to help us understand the shepherd/sheep relationship in the subsequent chapters. We saw that the concept could be traced back to the pagan oriental world as we saw in the case of Babylonian and Syrian [^]re [^]û (shepherd) already an epithet for rulers. We saw also that the idea was current in both religious and philosophical circles in the Greek world, as in the case of Hermes, Socrates and Thrasy-machus. These ideas were equally seen in a developed form in the Old Testament in, for example, Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34 and other places mentioned in this chapter.

With these in mind, we will now proceed to the New Testament concept of the shepherd/sheep relationship which will receive our attention from now on.

⁴³Philo, *Philo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), IV, 307-308. (Moses I, 60-62.)

CHAPTER III

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND OTHER NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE

The Shepherd Motif in the Synoptics

Since the Fourth Gospel will be the focus of our attention in Chapter IV, it is valuable here to survey and have a bird's eye view of the shepherd/sheep motif in the other New Testament writings. Our starting point will be the Synoptic Gospels.

In our discussion of the shepherd motif in the Old Testament, we mentioned that in later Judaism, the shepherds were a despised group which made some of the rabbis to wonder why God can be called a shepherd, especially in Psalm 23. But in the New Testament, the contrary is the case. The shepherd is never judged adversely in the New Testament. Rather he is depicted in his sacrificial loyalty; his sympathy and love are depicted in true-to-life pictures. For example, he seeks the lost sheep and is happy when he finds them (Luke 15:4-6). The Evangelists did not hesitate to use the shepherd as the picture for God in some of the Synoptic parables (Luke 15:4-7 par.; Matt. 18:12-14). This is the high estimation given to the shepherd in the Synoptic Gospels. It is therefore a great contrast to that of the rabbis whose list of occupations of thieving and cheating includes that of the shepherd.¹ One is therefore forced to conclude that it is due to the

¹ Joachim Jeremias, "ποιμήν, ἀρχιποίμην, ποιμαίνω, ποίμνη, ποίμνιον," in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), VI, 488.

example of the life of Jesus himself, who is a friend of the despised sinners and publicans and who had fellowship with them.

First, let us briefly state what we know of the professional shepherd in the New Testament. We have a mere mention of the professional shepherds specifically only once in the Lucan story of the Nativity (Luke 2:8-20). There has been much discussion on how these shepherds come to appear in the Christmas story, but this is not a place for such a discussion on the merits and demerits of such an argument. Let us in passing, however, note one of the many theories we have concerning this. One theory says that the traditional place of the birth of Jesus was in a stall. This is supported twice indirectly. First, Luke's mention of a manger (2:7, 12, 16) suggests a stall. Then a local tradition in Bethlehem points to a cave as the place of birth. Jeremias points out testimonies concerning this, chief of which is the excavations of 1933-34 which confirmed that the cave under the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was the sanctissimum of the Church built by the emperor's mother Helena, shortly before 330 A.D.² Jeremias' argument is that since the local tradition is not dependent on Luke (Luke mentions nothing about a cave), it is an independent witness for the birth in a stall and must be older than its fairly early attestation. "The shepherds in the Nativity Story are part of this tradition of the birth of Jesus in a stall."³ They are likely to be the owners of the stall; this is also why they can be told without further

²*Ibid.*, VI, 491.

³*Ibid.*

elaboration that the manger is the site of the sign from God (2:12). In short, the shepherds of the Christmas Story, like the manger and the cave, are a solid part of the local tradition in Bethlehem that a stall was the birthplace of Jesus. Evaluation of this local tradition depends on whether one puts the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem or (as against Matt. and Luke) in Nazareth.

We may once again return to the shepherd as a picture of God. In the New Testament, God is never called a shepherd. This is astonishing enough in view of the frequent use of shepherd figure for God as we observed earlier in the last chapter. The picture of God as a shepherd is strictly restricted to the parables of Jesus and does not occur again until the time of Ignatius in early second century. In his epistle to the Romans, he says in Chapter 9:1, "Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which has God for its Shepherd (pastor) in my place. . . ." "The paucity of reference in the pastoral usage of the New Testament may be explained by the great prominence given here to the christological application of the shepherd figure."⁴

In the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7 par. Matt. 18:12-14), Jesus tells of the joy of the shepherd when he finds his sheep after a difficult search. Although as we noted above God is not specifically called shepherd, this is obviously a picture of the joy of God when in the last judgment (Luke 15:7 ἔσται). He can proclaim remission to the penitent sinner. It is greater than His joy over the

⁴*Ibid.*

ninety-nine who stayed on the right path. The parallel in Matthew (18:14) agrees in content with Luke 15:7. With the "soteriological joy of God"⁵ Jesus justifies his love for sinners against the criticisms of opponents. Because God, like the rejoicing shepherd of the parable, is filled with such boundless joy at the bringing back of the lost, the fetching of sinners home is the saving office of Jesus. Once again the use by Jesus, the image of the despised shepherd, especially as in later Judaism, to illustrate God's love for sinners, reflects particularly vividly His antithesis to the Pharisaic despising of sinners.

To describe His mission, Jesus uses the ancient motif of the world renewal, that is the gathering again of the dispersed flock which is abandoned to destruction. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24, cf. 10:6). The allusion to Ezek. 34 is particularly plain in Luke 19:10, "for the Son of man came to *seek* and to *save* the lost." The image of the shepherd underlines not only Luke 19, but also Matt. 12:30 par. Luke 11:23, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." (συνάγειν/σκορπίζειν are terms among shepherds, cf. John 11:51f.) As the scattering is an image of disaster, so the gathering is an image of the coming of the age of salvation.

In Mark 14:27f. (par. Matt. 26:31f.), Jesus uses the figure of speech to intimate to the disciples His death and return:

⁵*Ibid.*, VI, 492.

πάντες σκανδαλισθησεσθε, ὅτι γέγραπται, πατάζω τὸν ποιμένα καὶ τὰ πρόβατα διασκορπισθήσονται (= Zech. 13:76). ἄλλα μετὰ τὸ ἐγερωθῆναι με προάζω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν (v. 28). This is an ancient tradition. For Zechariah 13:7 is quoted according to the Hebrew Text. Only the introductory imperative in Zechariah has been changed (into the future first person singular, πατάζω), and, as Jeremias points out, there is no trace at all of the divergent LXX text.⁶ Also ancient is the mention of the flight of the disciples (cf. Mark 14:50; John 16:32), "for this feature was soon smoothed over."⁷ (There is nothing corresponding to Mark 14:50 in Luke.)

Also verse 28 is equally ancient. We agree with Jeremias that the word προάγειν hardly corresponds to the course of events at Easter and "therefore it has not been formulated ex. eventu."⁸ Verse 28 is repeated in Mark 16:7 with the addition ἐκεῖ αὐτοῦ ὄψεσθε, which probably refers to the parousia (cf. ὄψεσθε in Mark 14:62 and par.). If this is correct, and προάγειν (14:28; 16:7) implies immediate rising for the parousia, it is obvious that this must be a pre-Easter tradition. Jesus is therefore the promised Good Shepherd, the "fellow" of God (Zech. 13:7), whom God smites (this is how the πατάζω of Mark 14:27 must be translated; πατάσσειν used of the sword means "to smite"), that is, upon whom He causes judgment to fall. The fate of the shepherd involves the scattering of the flock. In Zechariah, however, the whole emphasis is upon the cleansing and receiving of the remnant of

⁶*Ibid.*, VI, 493.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

the flock (13:8f.), and so, too, in Mark, it rests on the promise in verse 28. The fact that the promise in verse 28 is correlative to the prophecy of the passion in verse 27 is perfectly clear once it is realized that the προάγειν of verse 28 is a shepherd term; cf. John 10:4 (the προάγειν of the shepherd): ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται. "The shepherd usually goes in front; only on the way home does he follow behind to protect the flock and round up strays."⁹ This means that verse 27 quotes Zechariah 13:7b literally, while verse 28 is a free rendering of the contents of Zechariah 13:8f.

The death of Jesus thus initiates the eschatological tribulation, the scattering (Zech. 13:7) and decimation (13:8) of the flock and the testing of the remnant which is left in the furnace (13:9a). But the crisis, the scandal (Mark 14:27), is the turning-point, for it is followed by the gathering of the purified flock as the people of God (Zech. 13:9b) under the leadership of the Good Shepherd (Mark 14:28).

Finally, before we leave the Synoptic Gospels, we may note how Jesus uses the image of the shepherd and the flock to illustrate the future judgment. This motif is very clear in Matthew 25:32, "Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Like a scattered flock, the nations are assembled around the glorious throne of the Son of Man (v. 31f.). Jeremias says συνάγειν is a

⁹*Ibid.*, VI, 493.

technical term among shepherds.¹⁰ It is here that the process of judgment takes place, which is compared to the separation of the (white) sheep from the (black) goats (v. 32). Jeremias maintains that Matthew 25:32 (ὡπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τα πρόβατα ἀπο τῶν ἐρίφων) is not speaking of the separation between male and female (rams and sheep) but of the separation between (white) sheep and (black) goats.¹¹ The judgment is, however, followed by God's gracious rule over His small flock, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32). We shall discuss a little further when we come to consider the pastoral aspect of Jesus as shepherd below.

The Shepherd Motif in Other New Testament Literature

Apart from the Synoptic Gospels and John, there are a number of places Jesus is depicted as the shepherd of the sheep or the flock. The pastoral motif is very much in mind in these passages. We shall therefore treat these references in connection with the pastoral motif, both in the Synoptics and the rest of these New Testament references. The ones that come to mind immediately are I Peter 2:25 and Hebrew 13:20, the latter being a liturgical formula. In I Peter 2:25, Christ is called both ὁ ποιμὴν καὶ ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ψυχῶν cf. I Peter 5:4; ὁ ἀρχιποιμην. The description of Christ as Shepherd of Souls in I Peter 2:25 characterizes him (cf. the synonym ἐπίσκοπος) as One who provides for and watches or pastors over His people.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

The synonym, ἐπίσκοπος, is not directly under our present consideration. But it is worthwhile to note, in passing, its relationship with ποιμήν. At a first glance, it would seem that ἐπίσκοπος here merely strengthens ποιμήν, and thus denotes one who keeps watch over the flock. In general, the terms ποιμαίνειν and ἐπισκοπεῖν were closely linked in describing the pastoral work of the shepherd. Another meaning we might give to the term is the fact that Christ is One who has the fullest knowledge of souls. He knows every inner secret. He is the One who gives himself most self-sacrificingly to care pastorally for the souls of the faithful (cf. ἐπισκοπεῖν in Heb. 12:15). It is for this reason that ποιμήν and ἐπίσκοπος are so closely related.

The predicate "chief shepherd" in Heb. 13:20 is used to denote the uniqueness of Christ who surpasses all previous examples, especially Moses as we discussed in the last chapter (cf. Isa. 63:11). While in I Peter 5:4, it expresses the majesty of the Lord, who demands a reckoning from his shepherd. (We shall look into this more closely when we consider the congregational leaders as shepherds.) The metaphor describes Christ as the ruler of Israel (Matt. 2:6) promised in Mic. 5:3. As the earthly Lord, he is the merciful One who has pity on the leaderless flock (Mark 6:34; Matt. 9:36). As the exalted Lord, he is the Lamb who watches over the innumerable multitude of those who come out of great tribulation and leads them to the springs of living water (Rev. 7:17, cf. 14:4b). As the returning Lord, he is the apocalyptic ruler who feeds the Gentiles with a rod of iron (Rev. 12:5;

19:15; cf. 2:27). Here, then, is a place for a short discussion on Jesus as both Shepherd and Lamb.

Lamb as a term for Christ is not specifically part of our thesis, but we are forced to have a short discussion of it, as it is used interchangeably and linked together to be applied to Jesus. We see this both in Revelation, in the reference above and other places, and in John 1:29; 21:15. It must, however, be pointed out that different Greek words are used. Revelation has ἀρνίον while John has ἀμνός. But it will appear that their meanings are one and the same thing. In the case of "shepherd," John uses the noun ποιμήν and Revelation uses the verb ποιμαίνω.

The meaning of ἀρνίον is disputed. On the one side, it is argued that "ram" is the correct translation, since what is depicted is the wrath (Rev. 6:16f.), warfare and triumph (17:14) of the ἀρνίον. However, Jeremias doubts the "philosophical justification of the translation 'ram.'"¹² In Jewish Greek usage, the only significance is "lamb" as also in John 21:15 and II Cl. 5:2-4. The fact that the ἀρνίον is also described as "slain" (Rev. 5:6; cf. 5:9, 12; 13:8) shows that we cannot separate the statements of Revelation from what the New Testament says about Jesus as the Sacrificial Lamb.

Whenever ἀμνός/ἀρνίον appears in the New Testament, it is always applied to Jesus (see again John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; I Peter

¹²Joachim Jeremias, "ἀμνός, ἀρνίον, ἀρνίον," in Kittel, *op. cit.*, I, 341.

1:19) as the One who suffers and dies innocently and representatively. In Isaiah 53:7, the servant who suffers patiently is compared to a lamb, and this comparison is expressly related to Jesus in Acts 8:32. Thus Isaiah 53:7 might well be the origin of the description of Jesus as ἀμνός. Yet a second influence is also to be seen. The crucifixion of Jesus took place at the passover according to John (John 19:31f.). Thus, Paul also compared Jesus with the Paschal Lamb: τὸ πασχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη χριστός (I Cor. 5:7). To be sure, kids as well as lambs might be offered at the Passover (Ex. 12:3, 5); yet it was more usual to sacrifice lambs. Thus the comparison of Jesus with the Passover sacrifice might well have resulted in his description as ἀμνός. More likely the two lines of influence interacted.

The statements of Revelation concerning Christ as ἀρνίον depict him as redeemer and ruler, and in so doing bring out all the most important elements in his title as deliverer. First, the lamb bears the sign of his being slain (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8), his blood flowed in atonement for sin (5:9; 7:14; 12:11). Second, the lamb overcame death (5:5-6) and is omnipotent and omniscient (5:6). Also, he takes over the reins of the government of the earth by opening the book of destiny in the heavenly council (4:2ff.; 5:7ff.), receiving divine adoration (5:8ff.), establishing the rule of peace (7:9) on the heavenly mountain (14:1), overcoming demonic powers (17:14), exercising judgment (6:16ff.; 14:10), and making the distinction on the basis of the book of life (13:8; 21:27). Lastly, as victor he is the Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14; 19:16), celebrating his marriage festi-

val with the community (19:9) and ruling his own as partner of the throne of God (22:1, 3).

Therefore, the seeming contradiction of shepherd and lamb being applied to Jesus is not after all a contradiction. Both imageries are true of Christ in life and in death. As a lamb, he was sacrificed for us, and as shepherd, he led the way.

There is another function of the shepherd which occurred at least in one instance towards the end of the first century which we should mention here in passing. In the Apocalypse of Hermas, the shepherd/angel is the mediator of the revelation (see vision 5). But in vision 1:4f. (the oldest part of the work), an old lady has this function. In the vision, an angel of repentance appears in shepherd garb as the mediator of revelations. After this shepherd/angel, the work even in the second century came to be called the Pastor (Hermas), that is, "The Shepherd (who appeared to Hermas)." He was sent by the Most Holy Shepherd (Christ), (vision 5:2, cf. 10:1). According to Hermas, the shepherd is both the teacher, instructor, guardian angel and companion of Hermas, and most importantly, the mediator. However, we have no evidence in the New Testament for the idea of the shepherd as a mediator of revelation. Jeremias notes that "the only analogy is in the Hermetica."¹³ In the first tractate of the Corpus Hermetica, which has the title Poimandres, revelation is mediated through a "being of gigantic size" (1,1) which presents itself as "Poimandres,

¹³ Jeremias, "ποιμήν . . . ," VI, 498.

the Nous of the Supreme power" (Πουμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας Νους, 1, 2). Of course, it is debatable whether the name ποιμάνδρης is originally related to ποιμαίνεν, by popular etymology, it was taken to mean "the shepherd of men." The "author of the Shepherd of Hermas perhaps took the idea of a shepherd/angel as the mediator of revelation from this world of thought." This is supported by the similarity between the opening visions of Hermas in Revelation 5:1-4 and Corpus Hermetica 1, 1-4. In both instances, the apparition is asked who it is; it replies that it is ὁ ποιμήν or ὁ ποιμάνδρης, and is then transformed. However, it is hard to say whether or not there is a literary dependence of Hermas upon the Corpus Hermetica since the latter represents a later form of Gnosticism.

Shepherds as a Term for Congregational Leaders

Congregational leaders are called shepherds specifically only once in the New Testament, namely in the list of offices in Eph. 4:11; "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors (shepherds) and teachers." Jeremias notes that the absence of the article before the διδασκάλους which follows (τους δε ποιμένας και διδασκάλους) shows that "the pastors and teachers form a single group, obviously because they both minister to the individual congregation."¹⁴ We agree with Jeremias that the term "shepherd" is not yet an established title in Eph. 4:11, but the usage in Eph. 4:11

¹⁴*Ibid.*, VI, 497.

rests on a wider and broader framework. Thus, we have examples of the usage in second century writings. Ignatius in his epistle to the Philadelphians (2:1) says, " . . . follow like sheep where the pastor is" (ὅπου δε ὁ ποιμὴν ἐστίν, ἐκεῖ ὡς πρόβατα ἀκολουθεῖτε, cf. his epistle to the Romans 9:1 μνημονεύετε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ ὑμῶν τῆς ἐν Συρία ἐκκλησίας, ἥτις ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ ποιμένι τῷ θεῷ χρῆται).

This means that there is always a sense of the shepherd metaphor when congregational leaders are called shepherds. Along with this, we might consider passages like I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; cf. John 21:16. In these passages, the verb ποιμαίνειν is used for the work of such leaders, or the noun ποίμνιον is used for the congregation. We shall look more closely into this when we consider the community as a flock in the New Testament. These shepherds are the leaders of the local church (πρεσβύτεροι in I Peter 5:1; Acts 20:17; ἐπίσκοποι in Acts 20:28; or the bishop in Ignatius Phld. 2:1; Rom. 9:1 as quoted above). Only in John 21:15-17, which describes the appointment of Peter as a shepherd by the Risen Lord, does the whole church seem to have been in view as the sphere of activity. The pastor's task is to care for the congregation (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2-4; Ign. Phld. 2:1; Rom. 9:1). According to I Peter 5:2, looking after the finances seems to be included. He is to seek the lost (Matt. 18:12-14; 12:30 par. Luke 11:23), and to combat heresy (Acts 20:29f.). The fulfillment of this task by the pastor is to be an example for the flock (I Peter 5:3), an aspect we shall investigate further when we come to consider the ethical dimension of the term "shepherd." This is how the "chief

shepherd" will be able to recognize the ministry of the pastor (shepherd) on His appearing (v. 4).

The Community as a Flock in the New Testament

In chapter II above, we discussed that Israel shared the common ancient oriental description of the people as a flock. (Note again Ps. 23:1-4; 28:9; 68:7; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52f.; 79; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; 121:4; cf. I King 22:17.) However, in Israel, there is a different category in which the people are the flock, the secular use of the image was completely replaced by the religious use already in the time of Jeremiah (Jer. 13:17; 23:1f.; 50:6). Israel now becomes the flock of God. This is implicit already in the description of Yahweh as the Shepherd of Israel and it is made explicit for the first time in Hosea 4:16 ("Can Yahweh now feed them like a lamb . . . ?", cf. 13:6).

The Old Testament usage, in terms of Israel as the flock of God lives on in the New Testament, especially in the Synoptic Gospels. The motif is obviously present in the saying of Jesus that he is sent by God and that he sends his disciples to τα πρόβατα τα ἀπολωλῶτα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ (Matt. 15:24; 10:6). The saying seems to point to the fact that all Israel, including the pious, are in the eyes of Jesus like a flock which is abandoned and without protection. Building on Ezekiel 34:16, the variation in Luke 19:10 adds that it is the task of Jesus to go after (ζητῆσαι) the dispersed of the flock and to save them (σῶσαι). The metaphor of the lost sheep "which was found again" also underlines Luke 15:24 (ἦν ἀπολωλῶς καὶ εὑρέθη), v. 32.

Mark, quoting Numbers 27:17, notes that Jesus bewailed the absence of a shepherd (6:34). Matthew gives as a further reason for the compassion of Jesus the despair of the completely exhausted and weakened flock (9:36). The Old Testament idea that Israel is God's flock is echoed again in the saying in Revelation (quoting Ps. 2:9) that the returning Christ (Rev. 12:5; 19:15) or those who overcome (2:17) will feed the (flock of the) heathen with an iron rod, that is, destroy them (cf. 2:27b; 19:15).

For the most part, however, synoptics use the picture of God's flock for his band of followers (disciples) as the eschatological people of God (Mark 14:27f. par. Matt. 26:31f.; Matt. 10:16 par. Luke 10:3; Luke 12:32; John 10:1-29; cf. 16:32). This usage too is based on Old Testament, especially where Ezekiel was saying that Yahweh himself will take over the office of shepherd and gather and feed the scattered flock (Ezek. 34:11-22; Jer. 23:3; 31:10; cf. Mic. 4:6f.). In the saying of Luke 12:32, Jesus addresses his own as a "little flock." He combines the image of God's flock with the motif of the eschatological reversal of relation when, on the basis of Dan. 7:27 (" . . . the greatness of the Kingdom . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. . . ."). He tells His disciples that in spite of their fewness in number, they may contemplate threatened persecution without fear because a kingdom, dominion and power over all kingdoms is promised to them as the people of the saints of the Most High. God's eschatological flock is not merely threatened from without by wolves to which it is defenselessly given up (Matt.

10:16 par. Luke 10:3), it is also threatened within by wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). In the last tribulation, which robs it of the shepherd, it will be scattered to the four winds. But after the time of sifting, its shepherd will again go before it (Mark 14:27f. par. Matt. 26:31f.). Then the righteous from among the peoples will also belong to it (Matt. 25:32).

In the primitive church the comparison of the new people of God with a flock is still a common figure of speech (e.g. Acts 20:28f.; I Peter 5:3: τὸ ποίμνιον; I Peter 5:2: τὸ ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ; cf. LXX Jer. 13:17: τὸ ποίμνιον κυρίου; I Cl. 44:3, 54:2, cf. 16:1: τὸ ποίμνιον τοῦ χριστοῦ also John 10:26f.: τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἑμέα [Jesus], 21:16f.: τὰ πρόβατα μου, v. 15: τὰ ἄρνια μου). The metaphor of the flock also stands behind I Peter 5:8. Thus in John's Gospel, the "flock" is one of the substitutes for the missing term ἐκκλησία, and in I Clement, "flock in Christ" is used for the community. A mark of the members of the flock is that they know the Shepherd (John 10:4f., 14), believe in him (v. 26), hear his voice and follow him (v. 27).

So far unlike in later Judaism, we saw that the shepherd is never despised in the New Testament, but he is always an example of God's care and tenderness for his people. In the Synoptics and other New Testament literature (apart from John which will be considered separately), we saw that the terms of Shepherd and Lamb are both applied to Jesus and hence may be used interchangeably. The pastoral motif of Jesus as shepherd is also part of the metaphor as in the case of I Peter 2:25. Finally, our investigation shows that the "Shepherd"

is also used for congregational leaders for the determination of their responsibilities. Hence the community is usually referred to as the Flock. With these in mind we shall now proceed with the exegesis of John 10 in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF THE SHEPHERD IDEA IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The Use of Symbolism

The explicit use of symbolism is an obvious characteristic of John's Gospel. We have such symbols as living water, bread of life, the true vine, and the present symbol under discussion, the good shepherd, etc. It has long been recognized by the majority, if not all the New Testament scholars that the employment of such symbols in John is different from the use of parables in the Synoptic Gospels.

It is not our intention to belabor ourself with the unending discussion on whether or not the shepherd "allegory" in John is a parable or not. One thing is certain, that if we take a "child's" definition of a parable, namely, "a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning," we discover immediately that the shepherd "allegory" in John 10 is different. In the Synoptic Gospels, all the parables are in form of stories presenting a situation the hearers will recognize. Their judgment is invited upon the situation, either by implication or explicitly.

The judgment so elicited is intended to be applied to a different situation which is present to the mind of the teller and the hearer of the parable. . . . In general judgment is invited upon some single point, for the sake of which the parable is told.¹

¹C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 134.

What we have in John 10 is different from this. For the sake of a better understanding of this, we may make a brief comparison between the parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke 15:1-7 (par. Matt. 18:12-14) and the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18.

The parable in Luke draws a picture which exhibits the concern of a shepherd over the loss of a single sheep out of a flock of one hundred. The details which differ a little in Matthew (18:12-14) and Luke (15:4-7) have clearly no independent significance. The judgment of the audience is invited; "What do you think? if a man had a hundred sheep. . . ." The answer is obvious: a shepherd worthy of his name should act in the same way. The application to the situation in the ministry of Jesus is evident, in view of a whole body of narratives and sayings which indicate his concern about the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and the criticism it aroused. As a basis for any wider application, all we need to know is, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Now, let us compare the Johannine saying of the Good Shepherd in John 10. It is self-evident that we have a different picture, to be sure the details of the picture have separate significance. We shall observe the details when we exegete on the chapter. But suffice it to say here that long before the allegory is at the end, the figure of the shepherd is fused with that of Jesus Himself. The details are selected, because they aptly symbolize aspects of his work, details of which will also be discussed later.

In the Gospel of John, we have seven main open discourses with the Jews as there are seven signs. The discourses are: the new birth

(3:1-36), the water of life (4:1-42), the Divine Son (5:19-47), the Bread of life (6:22-66), the Life-giving Spirit (7:1-52), the Light of the World (8:12-59), and the seventh and last one, the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd is the last public address of Jesus recorded by John.

Traditionally, we think of the shepherd in terms of tenderness and concern for the flock. This is a legitimate thought as we have already pointed out in earlier chapters, and is legitimate for the ancient world (cf. discussion in Chapter II), as well as for the modern world. However, there is one point we tend to overlook especially when this is applied to Jesus. Men of Biblical times had other thoughts about the shepherd. This may not be explicit in John, but it is no doubt implied. The shepherd was an autocrat over his flock. Jesus is therefore also set forth in this "allegory" as the Ruler of his people in contrast to all false shepherds. For the significance of this role of shepherd, we may compare Revelation 2:27, πολυμανε̐ αὐτοῦς ἐν ῥαβδῶ σιδηρῇ.

The same verb is used in Matthew 2:6 (in a quotation from Mic. 5:2) to describe the activity of the Messianic rule (ἡγούμενος). Morris also points to Richardson's comments (TWBB): "We must, however, clearly understand that 'shepherd' in biblical phraseology means 'ruler,' and St. John is claiming that Jesus is the ideal ruler of prophetic expectations."² Since a survey has been made in Chapters II and III

²Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 498 n.

of what we consider to be the origin and background of the shepherd/sheep imagery in the New Testament, we shall now proceed to the text of John 10.

Examination and Exegesis of John 10:1-39

John is the only Evangelist to narrate the discourse of the Good Shepherd, but the imagery is evidently present elsewhere in the New Testament as we have seen. Bultmann says that "there is no reason to doubt that the discourse on the Good Shepherd comes from the book of revelation-discourse."³ This means that he considers the "allegory" as a revelation-discourse.

It is interesting to note the numerous rearrangements of John 10 by many scholars. We may just give a few examples here. Bernard, for example, proposes this order: Chapter 9, 10:19-29, 10:1-18, 10:30-39,⁴ a thesis that presupposes that 10:19-29 constituted one page of the manuscript of John which accidentally got out of order. This rearrangement brings the mention of the blind man in 10:21 closer to Chapter 9 and places the discourse on the sheep gate and the shepherd after the time indicated about Dedication in 10:22. Bultmann's reconstruction is more elaborate; he expands Jesus' remarks to the Pharisees in 9:39-41 by adding verses from Chapters 8 and 12 and then uses

³Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 359.

⁴J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1928), II, 345f.

10:19-21 as the conclusion of these remarks. Bultmann's order for the rest of Chapter 10 is 22-26, 11-13, 1-10, 14-18, 27-30, 31-39.⁵ These rearrangements and several others are noted, but here such rearrangements are not taken into consideration because we believe that they are not necessary. Therefore, we not only agree with C. H. Dodd, Raymond Brown and others that the discourse generally ends in verse 21, but we extend our present exegesis to verse 39 because we believe that the shepherd address runs from 10:1 to 10:39. This does not mean there are no difficulties for maintaining such a view. Apart from the fusion of "the door" and "the good shepherd," we have the "contradiction" of the feast of the Tabernacles in Chapter 7:1f. and the Dedication in 10:22f. Brown points to another difficulty, especially against the view that the shepherd address is connected with the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9. He says that the theme in Chapter 9 is light, which is not mentioned at all in Chapter 10.⁶

On the problem of the two feasts of Tabernacles and the Dedication, the author of this narrative might be confused in combining both as the Jews themselves did. For them, Dedication was another Tabernacles only celebrated in the month of Chislev (about December) instead of September or October (II Macc. 1:9). On the theme of light in Chapter 9 which is allegedly absent in Chapter 10, "it is worth nothing . . . that . . . the lighting of lamps was so marked a feature of the

⁵Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 329ff.

⁶Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), I, 388.

feast already in the time of Josephus, called 'Lights' (φῶτα Ant. XII, 325)."⁷ Though Jesus is not in Chapter 10, called the Light of the world, we contend that the thought which occurs at the beginning of Chapter 7 continues throughout Chapter 10. Furthermore, the Hanukkah (Dedication) and Tabernacles resemble each other (in II Macc. 1:9, Hanukkah is referred to as "the Tabernacles of the month Kislev"). We are not laying much emphasis on this point, but merely to point it out as the possibility of a confusion or combination of the two feasts.

We have stated above with regard to the context that verses 1-39 cannot be separated from the events of Chapter 9. In this way, verses 1-39 forms the conclusion of a series of incidents connected with the Feast of Tabernacles mentioned in 7:2. The discourse might then be delivered shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles. Jerusalem is to be taken as the place of the discourse, since the incidents narrated in 7:10ff. manifestly took place in Jerusalem. Quasten points out, however, the doubtfulness of the view of Belser, namely, that the exact date was the 22nd Tishri, 782 and the place definitely as the pool of Bethsaida-Siloe.⁸

Another possible reason for maintaining the connection between the preceding chapter and Chapter 10 is the likelihood that John sees a link in the Old Testament passages mentioned in Chapter II above. It

⁷C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), p. 315.

⁸John Quasten, "The Parable of the Good Shepherd," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, X:1 (1948), 5.

is apt, accordingly, that, immediately after Israel's shepherds have failed so conspicuously in the case of the man born blind, he should set forth the nature and functions of the Good Shepherd. The sequence, we maintain, is tolerably plain.

The main teaching here is clear enough but there are difficulties as we said above, and the passage is far from simple. Jesus is spoken of both as the Door and the Shepherd (who goes in by the door), statements not easy to harmonize formally. But again such statements are not uncommon in this Gospel. Jesus is the bread of life (6:35), and he gives it (6:51). He speaks the truth (8:45f.), and he is the truth (14:6). Throughout the Gospel, he is depicted as showing men the way and he is the way (14:6). Then the force of the Good Shepherd is not always the same, for he is contrasted first with thieves and later with hirelings. Again, the meaning of the sheep does not seem to be always exactly the same. Nor is the discourse itself perfectly straightforward, for literal and symbolic sayings are closely interwoven.⁹ But again these seeming contradictions can be resolved, even if partially in the light of the explanations given immediately above (see again John 6:35; 8:45f.; 6:51; 14:6). We shall now consider some of the details in verses 1-39.

Following Quasten and others, the following structure is

⁹ Brown sees the explanation in the presence of more than one parable: 1-3a forms a parable dealing with the proper approach to the sheep, through the gate opened by the gatekeeper, 3b-5 is a separate parable concerned with the relationship of sheep to shepherd. (See Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 391f.)

proposed for verses 1-21.¹⁰ Verses 22-39 will be treated separately.

- I. The Parable: vv. 1-5
 - A. The Door of the Fold: vv. 1-2
 - B. The Shepherd and his Flock: vv. 3-5
 - C. Parenthetical Remark of the Evangelist: vv. 6-7a
- II. Jesus, the Door for the Sheep: vv. 7b-10
- III. The Good Shepherd: vv. 11-18
 - A. The Shepherd and the Hireling: vv. 17-18
 - B. Jesus, the Good Shepherd: vv. 14-16
 - C. The Death of Jesus and the Will of the Father: vv. 17-18
 - D. Concluding Remarks of the Evangelist: vv. 19-21

Verse 1: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber."

The double "Amen" or "Truly" in the opening verse strengthens our view of the assumption we made earlier, namely, that there is a connection between what goes on before in Chapter 9 and 10. This duplication occurs twenty-five times in John and nowhere else in the New Testament and "it always has reference to something that has been said already, which is [now] expanded or set in a new light"¹¹ (cf. 8:34, 51, 58). The familiar phrase here agrees in detail with Rihbany's description of a sheepfold in Syria. He says that this particular reference is to the fold of the dry season. The dry season fold, he said, is usually roofless, called *hedherah*,¹² and is built of rough stones to the height of about five feet. Above the stone construction

¹⁰Quasten, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹¹Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 348.

¹²Cf. Abraham M. Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (New York: Riverside Press, 1916), p. 298.

raises a high hedge (*Seyaj*) of thorny branches, securely fastened between stones. It is this hedge which is especially designed to prevent the "thief and robber" from climbing into the sheepfold. The winter sheepfold which is not meant in this verse, is a roofed stone hovel called *merah*. It has one low door and no windows; therefore, by climbing up the fold "some other way," the robber could secure no booty.

The difference between the shepherd and the "thief and robber" is part of the main symbolic discourse and no doubt referring to actual life and situation. This is why we cannot agree with Bultmann that it is allegorical if it is made to refer to any particular figure or people.¹³ (This will be discussed further below in verse 8.) It is true that it could apply equally to anyone who unlawfully claims to have control over the flock.¹⁴ But in the Evangelist's situation, it probably refers to the Pharisees or Jewish authorities. Some commentators think the "thief and robber" refer to the Devil, or to the false teachers of I John, or to the Pseudo-Messiahs and the Pseudo-Saviours of the Hellenistic world.¹⁵ Wellhausen's view is also contrary to ours, for he believes that the reference cannot be to the Jewish authorities "because it is not the case that the flock does not follow them."¹⁶ But he does not see that the flock is not the Jewish people but the Ἰδοι. But in strictness, κλέπτης denotes something

¹³Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

¹⁴Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁵See *ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 372.

like a sneak-thief (it is used of Judas, 12:6) and ληστής, a brigand (it is used of Barabbas, 18:40). The combination may denote a readiness to engage in violence as well as dishonesty (cf. v. 10), though we should not make too sharp of a distinction between them. Incidentally, we find the same two words employed in Obadiah 5 ("coming by night"). However, we still maintain that the reference, if based on the text, has to do with the Pharisees in Chapter 9 and Jews in 10:31.

Verses 2-3: "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. . . ."

Rihbany, in the same place above, reminds us that the shepherd's "rude tent" is located near the door. There also his faithful dog lies. "The word porter in the text refers more, perhaps, to a Greek than Syrian custom."¹⁷ However, in case of large flocks, the under-shepherd, or the "helper" who guards the door, answers to the "porter."

The calling of the sheep or goats by name should not be taken literally. The animals are not named as persons are. The shepherd knows all the members of his flock by certain individual characteristics, and realizes the fact quickly when one of them is lost. The more prominent one "are given adjectival names, such as 'pure white,' the 'stripped,' the 'black,' the 'brown,' the 'gray-eared,' etc."¹⁸

¹⁷Rihbany, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

But it should be borne in mind that the saying, "And he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out," indicates the tender love of the shepherd for his flock, not necessarily that the animals answer to their names. There is no evidence that they are ever trained to do that. He "leads them out," not by calling their names, but by giving certain sounds which they recognize. Notwithstanding this lack of evidence and Rihbany's own Syrian experience as narrated in his book, *The Syrian Christ*, Barrett insists that the reference to "and he calls his own by name" indicates that each sheep has a name and that each name is called by the shepherd. Barrett continues, "Since the shepherd calls his own sheep it is implied that there are in the fold other sheep which are not his."¹⁹ In support of Barrett, however, we may compare verse 16 where it appears that the shepherd has other sheep which are not of the original fold. Barrett therefore concludes that "this, then is the fold of Judaism, which contained the first disciples and also the unbelieving Jews, of whom the former were to be joined by Gentile believers."²⁰

However, the point of verses 3-4 is that the shepherd has the right of ownership over the sheep; and consequently at the same time it describes his relationship to them, which is based on his right of ownership. For him, therefore, the way to them is not closed. He has the right to enter and this is recognized when the doorkeeper opens to

¹⁹ Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

him. Augustine connects this passage with Chapter 9 by emphasizing that there is one right way of entering, and the Pharisees did not use it. He also says,

There are many who, according to a custom of this life, are called good people, good men, good women, innocent, and observe as it were of what is commanded in the law; paying respect to their parents, abstaining from adultery, doing no murder, committing no theft, giving no false witness against anyone, and observing all else that the law requires--yet are not Christians. . . . Pagans may say, then, we live well. If they enter not by the door, what good will that do them, where of they boast?²¹

Various attempts have been made to find a meaning for the doorkeeper in verse 3, but none has wide acceptance, and perhaps none, it would seem, should. The point is that in an allegory or parable, not all details are significant. Some are inserted as necessary parts of the picture even though they have no part to play in the symbolism. So here with the doorkeeper John A. T. Robinson, unlike O'Rourke and Brown who see two parables in verses 1-5, sees only one parable; but shifts the center of emphasis from the shepherd to the gatekeeper.²² He reminds us of Synoptic passages where Jesus uses both the imagery of the gatekeeper (Mark 13:34) and the imagery of the coming of a thief (Luke 12:39) in order to inculcate watchfulness. Drawing on these comparisons, Robinson thinks that the parable in John is a warning to the authorities that they should fulfill their role as the watchmen for God's people, a frequent Old Testament theme (Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17;

²¹Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

²²John A. T. Robinson, "The Parable of the Shepherd (John 10:1-5)," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentlich Wissenschaft*, XXXXVI (1955), 233-240.

Isa. 62:6). This warning carries a tone of eschatological urgency, an urgency that is expressed elsewhere in the New Testament in terms of judgment standing at the gate (Mark 13:29; Rev. 3:20).

But as Brown reminds us, while this interpretation of the "parable" in 10:1-3a is possible, it does seem that verses 1 and 2 give more emphasis to the gate than Robinson allows.²³ We should also in this connection, compare Meyer's article where he maintains that verses 7-9 concentrate on ἡ θύρα, which is very far from indicating a misunderstanding of verses 1-5 on the part of some editor.²⁴ "In all the textual uncertainty of these verses there is evidence only that such an editor (if there is one at all!) 'got' the real point of verses 1-5, not that he missed it."²⁵ This, in effect, shows that there is the possibility that verses 7-9 are an integral part of the whole passage. Some of these details will be discussed when we exegete verses 7-9. But suffice it to say here that the explanation of the parable in verses 7-10 indicates that the real point in the parable is that of entering through the gate. If this is so, the attack on the Pharisees, according to Robinson's interpretation, is not so much in terms of their not being watchful gatekeepers (3a), as in terms of their being thieves and bandits who do not approach the sheep through the gate. Brown also makes the point that the feast of Dedication (near at hand,

²³Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 392.

²⁴Paul W. Meyer, "A Note on John 10:1-18," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXV (1956), 232-235.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 233.

it would seem from 10:22) which might bring to mind the example of the bad high priests of Maccabean times, who were truly thieves and bandits, suggests that Jesus meant to include in his remarks the Sadducees as well as the Pharisees.²⁶ In Mark 11:17-18, both the priests and scribes heard Jesus charge that God's house was being turned into a den of bandits.

Verse 4: "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

The impression one gets from the emphasis of commentators on the shepherd's going *before* the flock is that he does so invariably. Rihbany reminds us as far as he knows from his Syrian experience, that this is not absolutely correct.²⁷ As a rule, the shepherd in Palestine goes before the flock, but frequently he is seen behind it. The shepherd walks behind, especially in the evening when the flock is on its way to the fold, in order that he may gather the stragglers and protect them from the stealthy wolf. The shepherd often walks by the side of the flock, at about the middle of the line. In case of large flocks, the shepherd goes before and the helper goes behind. "The effective, and, I might say, unerring, guidance of the shepherd is especially shown when he leads his flock in the narrow paths."²⁸ For example, in Syria and mostly in entire Palestine, the fields are

²⁶Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 392.

²⁷Rihbany, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 301.

fenced. The pastures and the planted fields are separated by narrow footpaths, and here and there by low stone walls, which are intended, however, more for landmarks than for fences. The fields are forbidden ground. In transferring his flock from one pasture to another, the shepherd must not allow any of his animals to stray from the beaten path into the fields. For if he does, he will not only have to pay damages to the owners of the fields, but will ruin his own reputation as a shepherd. In this connection, Rihbany mentions one Sa'ied in his own home town, who was widely famed as a shepherd, for his skill in leading his flock in the narrow paths.²⁹ He was often known to guide a flock of about one hundred and fifty head of goats (which are much more unruly than sheep) without a helper, in a narrow path or over a stone wall, for a considerable distance, without allowing a single one of them to set foot on the forbidden ground. The flock obeyed him because "they knew his voice" as that of their good shepherd.

There is no doubt that the spiritualization of the duty of a shepherd which we have both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, came about as a result of such a faithful guidance of such an earthly shepherd as Sa'ied. Such lent the writer of the Twenty-third Psalm to sing in his meditation upon the Lord's faithfulness to his own, and to utter his faith in the line, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

In passing, we may note the attitude of the Fulani in

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 303.

Nigeria.³⁰ They do not only drive or lead their flock to pastures around the area they live (in the northern part of the country), but they lead their flock from the North to the South, hundreds of miles away, for sale. Although, because of more transportation facilities, the distance covered on foot is shorter these days, yet we still see in them the example of the Palestinian shepherds. As a rule, however, the Fulani go behind their flock, and usually a single person will handle a small- or medium-sized flock. But also, as in the Orient, in a large flock, a co-shepherd may go before the flock.

Generally, however, there is another motif for the Fulani to go behind their flock. It is generally believed, not only in Nigeria, but mostly in Africa, that dangers always come from behind and therefore the stronger man should stay behind to either prevent or confront the danger that may come. As a result of this, if a man and a woman, or a set of men and women are walking from the field, the woman or women should always be in the front, since it is an accepted custom that men are stronger and braver than women. The same pattern is followed in a case of adults and children coming from the field; the children should, as a rule, be in the front. Therefore, the Fulani, as the shepherd, stays behind his flock to prevent or confront the dangers that might have happened to the flock. However, it makes little or no difference if the shepherd goes before or behind the flock. The motif remains the same, namely, to protect the flock from possible dangers.

³⁰Fulani is one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria. They are mainly shepherds and raise the majority of beef consumed in the whole country.

Some points of language are worth noting before we leave verse 4 for verse 5. ὅσα reminds us of the particular relationship of these sheep and the shepherd, which we consider to be the basis of the entire passage. (ΑΓΔ read πρόβατα for πάντα) indicates that he secures them all. ἐκβαλῃ is somewhat puzzling. It is the word used of expelling the formerly blind man from the synagogue in Chapter 9, verse 34 and may form a link between the two narratives. But not too much can be made of this as the sense is different. There the false leaders expelled the men. Here the rightful shepherd compels, as it were, the sheep to leave the fold, but for their good. The word does have the air of force about it. Left to themselves, the sheep by their nature might not go in the right way, but the shepherd constrains them. He uses force if necessary to ensure that their best interests are served. Brown suggests that ἐκβάλλειν is probably just a variant of ἐξαγεῖν,³¹ but he also does not rule out the possibility of a reference to the helplessness of the sheep. "Sheep often have to be pushed through a gate."³²

On the other hand, Hoskyns thinks that the Greek word ἐκβάλλειν does not necessarily suggest any physical force.³³ He argues that the same word is used in certain passages without any sense of force (e.g.

³¹Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 385.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 373.

Matt. 12:35; 13:52; Luke 10:35; James 2:25) and that it is not simply equivalent to "lead forth." "The helplessness of the sheep," he says, "is contrasted with the free action of the shepherd, for their freedom depends upon his action, and they are thus constrained to freedom."³⁴ Hoskyns sees an allusion here to the expression of the relation of the believing Christian to the Christ in the words of John 12:32: "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." He concludes on an interesting note, saying that, in Luke 10:2, the same word is used "to express a divine constraint, which in no way excludes willing surrender."³⁵ However, in spite of Hoskyns' interesting interpretation, we still maintain that there is an element of force in the use of the word and re-emphasize the point made earlier in the beginning of this chapter. There we tried to bring out another thought, often forgotten in the idea of the shepherd, namely, the fact that the shepherd is the ruler, the autocrat over his flock (cf. again Rev. 2:27; Matt. 2:6). In short, the use of ἐκβάλλειν here may suggest the activity of the Messianic rule. The shepherd's care for the flock is of a primary concern, but at the same time, the flock has got to be ordered, to be ruled and therefore sometimes to be forced or constrained.

Verse 5: "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

This is another illustration of the relation between the

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*

shepherd and the sheep, the relationship of familiarity which springs up from the relationship of caring. The sheep know who cares for them; they know his voice. We have said that the sheep are not necessarily given individual names, but yet the shepherd has certain methods of whistling or calling them, and they recognize this. The fact that "a stranger they will not follow. . . ." is not limited to the Palestinian sheep, but to Greek and similar civilizations.

The following quotation, from Hartley's *Researches in Greek and the Levant*, page 321, is so strikingly illustrative of the allusion in verse 5 and the whole of verses 1-16, that we cannot do better than quote it:

Having had my attention directed last night to the words in John 10:3f., I asked my man if it was usual in Greece to give names to the sheep. He informed me that it was, and that the sheep obeyed the shepherd when he called them by their names. This morning I had an opportunity of verifying the truth of the remark. Passing by a flock of sheep, I asked the shepherd the same question which I had put to the servant, and he gave me the same answer. I then bade him to call one of his sheep. He did so, and it instantly left its pasturage and its companions and ran up to the hands of the shepherd with signs of pleasure and with a prompt obedience which I had never before observed in any other animal. It is also true in this country that 'a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him.'³⁶

See also Thomson's *The Land of the Book*, page 203:

The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind the sheep of his presence; they know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger.³⁷

³⁶ Cited from William Smith (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1863), III, 1243.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

In both cases we do not believe that Hartley and Thomson meant more than the fact that the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is intimate, it is one of care and love. Because of this they (the sheep) know him and recognize him. But the possibility of giving adjectival names to some prominent ones around them, as said before, cannot be ruled out.

The use of ἀλλότριος may be another way of contrasting the relationship of the shepherd and the sheep with the stranger and the sheep. Substantively, τὸ ἀλλότριον is used as the opposite of τὸ ὑμέτερον in Luke 16:12. It can also denote "that which does not form part of the subject in question."³⁸ It is interesting to note that it is used in opposition to υἱοῦ in Matthew 17:25, and so in opposition to ποιμὴν in John 10:5 under discussion. The suggestion of Bernard, that we are to think that there were several flocks in the sheepfold so that there would be a process of separation when the shepherd came out to call his own flock, therefore is far from certain.³⁹ The Gospel never mentions the presence of other sheep in this fold, and moreover, it will mean giving the same type of interpretation to the Good Shepherd in John 10, and the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:32f. There is no evidence that the meanings of the parables (or παρούμενα as John calls it) is the same.

³⁸Friedrich Büchsel, "ἄλλος, ἀλλότριος, ἀπαλλοτριώω, ἀλλογενής, ἀλλόφυλος," in Kittel, *op. cit.*, I, 265.

³⁹Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 350.

Verse 6: "This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them."

The first obvious thing we notice here is that this is the Evangelist's own comment on verses 1-5 above. We have said at the beginning of this chapter that we would belabor ourself less on the endless argument of whether or not the passage under investigation is a parable or an allegory. Also, we have no evidence of knowing why the Evangelist prefers παροιμία, which occurs again only in 16:25, 29 (except in II Peter 2:22, where it introduces a quotation from Prov. 26:11), to παραβολή used in the Synoptic Gospels. The majority of scholars, however, agree that there is not much difference in the meaning of the two Greek words. Bernard says that both παροιμία and παραβολή go back to the Hebrew הַשְׁוָיָה .⁴⁰ ἐκέλευε δε οὗτοι ἐγνωσαν. "They" are obviously the Jews of Chapter 9 (9:18f.), who there and elsewhere (see on 1:19), are the adversaries of Jesus.

The more interesting question is why they do not understand the *παροιμία*. The idea of a shepherd as a spiritual leader was, of course, quite familiar to them. We saw this during our investigation of the Old Testament idea of the shepherd. Also the ordinary habits of the professional shepherds in relation to their sheep was a familiar feature. One of the reasons we might give for lack of understanding is that they are not his sheep and therefore do not hear and understand what he says (v. 26). But it appears there is another deeper reason

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, II, 351.

which is the remote cause of the lack of understanding. This lack of understanding becomes more intelligible if we remember that the entire discourse contains reproaches against, and attacks upon, the Jews, notably Pharisees. Such reproaches must have seemed strange to them, with the peculiar sense of self-righteousness attributed to them in the Gospels. They, also, must have been reluctant to make the comparison, "since in that case, they must acknowledge themselves to be the men whom the sheep . . . did not follow naturally."⁴¹ How little the Pharisees referred such reproaches, in form of comparisons, to themselves is shown by the Parables of Two Sons and the Wicked Tenants (Matt. 21:28ff.). On that occasion, Jesus was forced to indicate this reference to them explicitly before they could understand it.

Bernard, however, suggests that what they did not understand or realize was the "oppositeness of the allegory in verses 1-5, in relation to their question, "Art thou the Messiah?" (v. 24).⁴² And in particular, what was the Door through which Jesus said the true shepherd must come? In view of what we know about the Pharisees elsewhere in the Gospel, it is more likely that the Pharisees did not or pretend not to understand because of the reasons we advanced earlier above.

Verse 7: "So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.'"

There are two important observations here. The "I am" (ἐγώ

⁴¹Quasten, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁴²Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 351.

εἰμι) formula and Jesus as the "door of the sheep." Although, this is not a thesis on the ἐγώ εἰμι formula which is another subject in itself, but we should be familiar with the different forms of *ego eimi* in order to know the type we have in John 10:7. Also some understanding of its use will make us realize its import in John 10.

Bultmann makes four distinct categories of *ego eimi*, though there may be transitions between them.⁴³ The first is what he calls "presentation formula," which replies to the question: "who are you?" By the use of *ego eimi*, the speaker introduces himself as so and so. Primarily, Bultmann regards its use here and elsewhere as a revelatory formula, another way of saying that *ego eimi* is used in a sacred formula as in the Orient. However, Bultmann makes the point that *ego eimi* is not used as a sacred formula in John 4:26; 8:18, 23; 18:5f., 8. I cannot see any difference in usage both in these passages and other "I-sayings" in, for example, 6:35, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, 8:12, ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου, 14:6, ἐγώ ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή, etc. In the Orient where the *ego eimi* is used in a sacred formula, the God who appears introduces himself by it in a "presentation formula," cf. Genesis 17:1: " . . . the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, 'I am El-Shaddai'" (cf. Gen. 28:13; Jub. 24:22; Rev. 1:17). There are examples also in non-Biblical sources (cf. Aristophanes, Plut. 78: ἐγώ γάρ εἰμι πλούτος).⁴⁴

⁴³Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 225, n. 3.

⁴⁴See other examples in Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

The second distinction made by Bultmann is what he calls the "qualificatory formula," which answers the question: "What are you?", to which the reply is, "I am that and that," or "I am the sort of man who" In all the two cases above, *ego* is the subject. This is also used in the sacred language of the Orient: Isaiah 44:6, "I am the first and the last and apart from me there is no God" (also 44:24; 45:5-7; 48:12, etc.). Examples of this are also numerous in non-Biblical literature--Epict. diss. 1V8, 15f. ἐγὼ φιλόσοφος εἰμι . . . μουσικὸς . . . χαλκεὺς; I 19,2; II 19, 29; III 1; etc.⁴⁵

The third one is the "identification formula," in which the speaker identifies himself with another person or object. *Ego* is also the subject. Thus, the Egyptian god, Rê, identifies himself with Chepre: "I am he who arose as Chepre."⁴⁶

The fourth and last formula is the "recognition formula," which is to be distinguished from the others by the fact that here *ego* is the predicate. It answers the question, "Who is the one who is expected, asked for, spoken to?", to which the reply is, "I am he." (Cf. questions such as we have in Isa. 41:4, "Who has performed and done this?" answer, "I the Lord, . . . I am He."; cf. also Matt. 11:3.)

Brown, on the other hand makes three distinct formulae.⁴⁷ The absolute use with no predicate (8:38, 58; 13:9); the use where a

⁴⁵Bultmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226 for more examples of non-Biblical sources.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 533f.

predicate may be understood (6:20); the use with a predicate nominative (6:35, 51; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). From the analysis of Bultmann and Brown, it appears in John 10, we have the "presentation formula," according to Bultmann, and the use with a predicate nominative, according to Brown. However, the most important thing to note here is that the use of *ego eimi* passes from the day-to-day common use to the sacral or revelatory use.⁴⁸

Different interpretations are given to the implication of Jesus as "the door of the sheep" here. The Sahidic version reads "the shepherd" instead of "the door," in order to simplify the text. Admittedly, ἡ θύρα is both the unexpected and the more difficult reading, and on the principle of *"difficilior lectio Potior,"* should be preferred. Moffatt and others think that the Sahidic version ὁ ποιμήν is the true reading. ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων has the weight of manuscript authority overwhelmingly in its favor, and according to Bernard, "ὁ ποιμήν would not fit the argument at this point."⁴⁹ For one thing, verses 1-4 speak about ἡ θύρα, and it will seem that the exposition is given in verse 7. For another, the Jews could not have failed to understand Jesus' claims to be the Shepherd (v. 26), their difficulty appears to be the fact that Jesus should also be the door. It is this explanation that is taken up in verses 7-9. In other words the Evangelist is still

⁴⁸For full details especially on the "I am" without a predicate, see the little book by Philip B. Harner, *The "I am" of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970).

⁴⁹Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 352.

very consistent with one of the figures of the allegory, namely, the door, mentioned in verses 1 and 2.

"Door" is used metaphorically in other places in the New Testament (e.g. Luke 13:24; Acts 14:27; I Cor. 16:9; etc.) but this is the only passage in which Jesus himself is regarded as the door. The thought resembles 1:51 where Jesus is regarded as the ladder connecting heaven and earth, or 14:6, where Jesus is the way, except that here it gets its force from the imagery from the sheepfold. The meaning seems to be that there is but one "door" or "gate" to the sheepfold, and both the shepherd and the sheep must enter through the only gate. There is no other way for them. But Jesus does provide the way. Many commentators think that the thought here seems to be that primarily, Jesus provides the door through which the shepherd enters, and that in verse 9, the emphasis is on the door as the way for the sheep to go in.⁵⁰

The idea that there is a door, or doors, leading to heaven is one of great antiquity. It is illustrated in Genesis 28:17, in the account of Jacob's dream, a quotation also referred to in 1:51 above. The imagery appears also in Greek literature and in Gnostic writings.⁵¹ This does not necessarily mean John's dependence on these sources. To be sure, such parallels are remote from the Evangelist's conception in which Jesus himself is the door. Vincent Taylor suggests that the

⁵⁰See Bernard, *ibid.*, and Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

⁵¹Vincent Taylor, *The Names of Jesus* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1953), p. 138.

Fourth Evangelist may have known the saying from Q in Luke 13:24,⁵² "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." He adds, however, that the connection is only verbal, since the exhortation is a challenge to moral effort. He therefore suggests further that the most probable explanation is that he is indebted to Psalm 118:20: "This is the gate of the Lord: The righteous shall enter into it." This suggestion is legitimate especially in view of the fact that this passage was interpreted Messianically in later times, and, as Mark 12:10f. suggests, belongs to a Psalm upon which Jesus had reflected. However, we must allow for a development in the Evangelist's thought. The name arises naturally out of the allegory in John 10:1-5 and expresses his conviction that entrance into life depends on believing in Jesus. The name is the expression of his spiritual evaluation of the significance of Jesus.

In early Christianity, the name appears in Ignatius (Philad. 9:1), Hermas (Sim. 9:12, 1), and other post-Apostolic writers; but it has not attained the permanence which belongs to other Johannine titles, partly because the truth that Jesus is the only way to the Father was expressed in other ways (cf. Rom. 3:26; Acts 16:31; etc.), and partly because an even deeper impression was made by the picture of Christ standing at the door and knocking, as depicted in Revelation 3:20, especially when this passage was interpreted as His call to repentance (cf. R. H. Charles Rev. 1:100f.). Nevertheless, the description of

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 139.

Christ as "the Door," as "the one means of entrance to the church at all times,"⁵³ has imperishable value both in itself and as illustrating the high Johannine estimate of His person.

Verse 8: "All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them."

In verse 7 above, Jesus designated the entrance by the door as the mark distinguishing the rightful shepherd from the unlawful intruder, but he himself is also the door. In short, Jesus, with divine power and divine righteousness, defines himself as the only person through whom the pastoral office is legitimately bestowed in the Kingdom of God. (Cf. Heb. 3:1f; 5:1f.) If Jesus is actually the door, it follows logically that all who preceded him were robbers and thieves, unlawful shepherds.

This statement, however, couched in general terms, has even been a source of difficulties for exegetes, and for this reason the textual tradition concerning it is less certain. At times, πάντες (D) or πρὸ ἐμοῦ is omitted to eliminate the acerbity of the idea. On the genuineness of πάντες, there can scarcely be any doubt, because of the textual testimony. The situation with πρὸ ἐμοῦ is different. It is lacking in ζ , several other uncials, almost entirely in the Latin, Syriac and Sahidic tradition. To be sure, the deletion of πρὸ ἐμοῦ fails in its purpose for ἦλθον would have permitted the reference to reconcile the aorist ἦλθον with εἰσύν. In short, the difficulty of

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 139.

this verse remains.

To what or whom, then, is the passage to be referred? First, it appears that the Old Testament prophets are not meant as far as the Evangelist himself is concerned. His stand on this is clear from passages like 4:22; 5:45ff.; 6:45; 7:19; 10:34; 12:38; etc.⁵⁴ Secondly, from the viewpoint of the text, this is another reference to verse 1, "he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber." Some of the Gnostics appear to have used the expression to discredit the entire Old Testament, including the God who speaks there. Hippolytus says that Valentinus held this view (Refut. 6:30; ANF., V, p. 89).

Barrett thinks it refers to false Messianic claimants and fraudulent saviours,⁵⁵ O. Cullmann (JBL 74 [1955]) thinks that the allusion is to figures like the "Teacher of Righteousness" in the Zadokite Fragment and in the Habbakuk commentary (I QHP). Bultmann believes the language is completely metaphorical, and stresses "the exclusiveness and the absoluteness of the revelation";⁵⁶ and at the same time that the coming referred to must be eschatological, coming in one of the great moments of salvation. Further, he thinks that in Gnostic source which he posits for John, this was a condemnation of Moses and the prophets, but that in the Gospel it may have been

⁵⁴Cf. Hoskyns, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

⁵⁵Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

⁵⁶Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

reapplied to the divine saviours of the Hellenistic world. In short, Bultmann thinks that the Pharisees or the Jewish authorities cannot be meant here. This also agrees with the view of Professor Titus when he says:

It must be remembered that the milieu of the evangelist is constituted by developments of the second century, and that problems confronted by Jesus in Palestine in relation to Jewish ecclesiastical leaders of his time are, in the final analysis, secondary.⁵⁷

We agree that the problems and persecutions in the time of Jesus are secondary to that of the second century, especially when we remember the claims and movements of people like Judas or Theudas (Acts 5:33-39) or Barkokhba (cf. John 5:43). But in view of the conviction we have established earlier on that the story of the blind man in Chapter 9 cannot be separated from Chapter 10, we agree with Brown that the Pharisees and Sadducees remain the most probable targets of Jesus' remarks.⁵⁸ "The unhappy line of priestly rulers and politicians from Maccabean times until Jesus' own day could certainly be characterized as false shepherds, thieves, and robbers who came before Jesus."⁵⁹ And further, apart from the polemic in Chapter 9, the Pharisees too had soiled themselves in the political power struggle in the Hasmonian and Herodian periods. The strong language used in this explanation of the parable may well be compared with that of Matthew

⁵⁷Eric L. Titus, *The Message of the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 150.

⁵⁸Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 393.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

23:1f. where Jesus attacks the unjust exercise of authority over the people by the scribes and Pharisees. Admittedly, the reference may not be limited to the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders of Jesus' time, but also to all pretended revealers, all pretended saviours "who have ever called men to them, who have ever been followed by men."⁶⁰ But to say like Bultmann and others that there is no allusion here to the rival revealers of the Evangelist's time or the religious leaders of his day, does not do justice to the text.

The sheep "did not heed" the false shepherds, "the thieves and the robbers." Barrett sees here a kind of predestination, that Christ's own sheep were predestinated as his, and therefore could not be led astray by false Christs.⁶¹ Perhaps rather than any notion of predestination, the meaning is that all who choose to follow Christ, all who accept him in faith will not heed or follow the false shepherds or false revealers as Bultmann calls them.⁶²

Verse 9: "I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

This verse repeats with strong emphasis, "I am the door." Nevertheless, the thought here acquires a new turn. Taken by itself, verse 9 would not only admit but even demand the conception that Christ is the door for the sheep, that is, the flock of the Christian community

⁶⁰Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

⁶¹Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

⁶²Cf. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

who reach salvation through him. But consider within the framework of the whole and in relation to verse 10, in which the contrast between thief and shepherd reappears, verse 9 can only be dealing with the leaders of the flock who seek pasture for their sheep and are themselves saved. Christ appears here as the mediator of all true spiritual direction. He who receives his mission from Christ will be able to transmit to his sheep the necessary teachings of salvation; he will find good pasture. This is what Bultmann means by "the exclusiveness and absoluteness of revelation."⁶³ The words "by me" emphasize the same fact. It is he and no other who enables men to enter salvation. If there is one door, then "men enter by it or stay outside."⁶⁴ They cannot demand another door.

John does not often use the verb "to save" and he never explains exactly what he means by it. It is found in 3:17; 5:3; 34; 11:12; 12:24, 47. Matthew uses it fifteen times, Mark, fifteen times, and Luke, seventeen times, so that John's use is much less marked. Here also John lacks the frequent Synoptic use of the verb for healing (except for 11:12 and even this is not quite the same for it does not refer to a healing activity of Jesus). With John, it signifies much the same as having eternal life, and indeed the two ideas lie close together in 3:16ff. and here (cf. v. 10).

Verse 10: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁶⁴Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 508.

This verse characterizes the thief more definitely; he comes only to kill and slay. In this respect, he presents a sharp contrast to Jesus in the second half of the verse. Thus the progress of thought takes a new direction. Jesus is no longer the door but once again the antithesis of the thief and the robber, the shepherd. The thief, or the robber, steals, kills and destroys. On the other hand, our Lord gives life superabundantly to the sheep, life in that deeper sense in which John speaks of it.

θύειν is not used elsewhere in John. θυσία is not used at all. Ἀποκτείνειν is fairly frequent (twelve times). Barrett suggests that θύειν was probably chosen here in particular as an appropriate term for the slaughtering of animals. This is why he thinks that "this word at least is still part of the parable-allegory, not the interpretation, the killing of Christians in persecution is not in mind."⁶⁵ Bultmann, on the other hand, maintains that the fact that instead of the expected ποιῆν we have ἐγώ, means that the language is metaphorical and therefore could not have belonged to the original parable.⁶⁶ G. D. Kilpatrick took up the study of *thuein* in the New Testament and concludes that in the present passage, "the three verbs have each a proper meaning and one is otiose, 'steal, kill for food, and destroy.'"⁶⁷ If *thuein* means "sacrifice" or "kill for food" or both, the speaker

⁶⁵ Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

⁶⁶ See Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

⁶⁷ G. D. Kilpatrick, "The Meaning of *Thuein* in the New Testament," *The Bible Translator*, XII:1 (1961), 132.

merely anticipates what he was going to say in the following verse, namely, that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, offers his life as a sacrifice ("lay down") for the sheep. This theme will receive more attention in the following verse. Bultmann, then, cannot be right in his assumption that the language is simply metaphorical and not part of the original parable.

Verse 11: "I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

We have already noted the "I-sayings" especially in relation to what it means in John 10. Here, we have another emphatic declaration of ἐγὼ εἰμὶ of Jesus.

In Chapter II we dealt with the background and the antithesis to the shepherd/sheep motif. What we have here is also the antithesis to the bad shepherds of Ezekiel 37, Zechariah 11, and Jeremiah 23. We saw this in more detail in Chapter II. Philo (de Agric. 6, 9, 10) draws out a similar contrast between the ἀγαθὸς ποιμήν, who does not allow his sheep to scatter, and the mere herdsman (κληνοτρόφος), who permits the flock to do as it likes. We do not, however, assume a connection between Philo and John 10. "The similarity does not go beyond what may naturally be observed between the words of two writers who are expounding the same image."⁶⁸ We saw also in Chapter II that in the Midrash Rabbah II:2 on Exodus III:1, David who was the great shepherd of the Old Testament is described as *yāfeh rōēh*, literally

⁶⁸Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 356.

"the handsome shepherd" (see I Sam. 16:12). Brown suggests that καλός probably means "noble" here rather than "model,"⁶⁹ and that "model" will be more exact in verse 14. Perhaps both senses are meant here, and I will even suggest that "model" is more appropriate here. We shall discuss this in more detail later in this chapter when we consider the ethical aspect of Jesus as the good shepherd. Suffice it to say here that by the ideal of the shepherd, John means also what Matthew says in Matthew 5:48, "You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." We should therefore understand the term καλός, both as a title as Bultmann understands it,⁷⁰ but also unlike Bultmann, as a comparison. This may be the reason why the Evangelist does not use ἀληθινός but instead, he uses καλός. There is not much difference, if any, between καλός and ἀγαθός.

Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. This is a Johannine expression (13:37; 15:13; I John 3:16), as contrasted with "to give one's life" (Mark 10:45). John's expression is not found in the LXX, the nearest to it being ἐθέμην τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐν τῇ χειρὶ μου (Judg. 12:3f., cf. I Sam. 19:5; 28:21) ἐθηκα τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐν χειρὶ μου: "I took my life in my hand" simply means I risk my life, but in John, τὴν ψυχὴν τιθεναὶ means much more; it means "to divest oneself of life" (cf. John 13:4). To do this is precisely to die. To do this on behalf of the sheep as indicated above, is uniquely Johannine. The

⁶⁹Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 386.

⁷⁰Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

Synoptic Parable of the Lost Sheep pictures the trouble that a shepherd will take for the lost sheep; John's expression in verse 11 extends the risk of the shepherd even to the point of death. Verse 15 should also be viewed along this line.

Verse 11, read superficially, contradicts the preceding verse 10. In verse 10, Jesus says he came to give life more abundantly. If he came so that the sheep may have life and verse 11 says Jesus is to "divest himself of life," what is the difference between him and the robbers who come to kill and destroy? Professor Titus reminds us that his death is half of the story.⁷¹ Death, apart from the resurrection, would not make a difference between him and those who came before or the robbers and thieves. Therefore, verses 11 and 15 should be viewed in relation to Johannine conception of the cross. Crucifixion, for John, is glorification, not even mere death and resurrection. In short, "the cross is the instrument of eternal life and death is foreign to it."⁷² So that the flock, the sheep, is still safe and secure and can still expect abundant life from Jesus as a result of his glorification.

Verses 12-15: "He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep. . . ."

This is another contrast between the good shepherd and those

⁷¹Titus, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁷²*Ibid.*

"whose own the sheep are not." Already we have observed that the robbers, the thieves, and the strangers, are not for the interest and care of the sheep. The "hireling" serves as another parenthesis to the good shepherd. It must be noted, however, that the hireling cannot be equated with the robbers and thieves. Certainly there could be honest and conscientious hirelings. But the point here is that, as casual helpers, they lack the proper knowledge of the sheep. In the only place where μισθωτός is used in the New Testament, apart from this verse and the next; it refers to fishermen working for pay (Mark 1:20). But one thing is sure, it indicates someone other than the owner. It speaks of a man whose interest is in what he is paid for doing his job rather than in the job itself. But again this does not rule out the possibility of an honest, interested hireling, a fact always overlooked by exegetes. However, the hireling we see here is one who has no real concern for the sheep. In the Mishna, elaborate directions are given regarding the legal responsibility of the hireling shepherd for losses incurred through the depredations of wild animals and brigands. He is held responsible if the beast was lost or stolen, but is absolved from responsibility when an armed brigand appears whom he cannot withstand. If one wolf attacks the flock, he is bound to resist it. But if there are two, the damage may be regarded as an "unavoidable accident."⁷³ In contrast, the good shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep under all circumstances. Compare verses 28 and 29. "They shall never

⁷³Mishnah, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 360.

perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."

The imagery of the wolf appears in Matthew 10:16: "I send you like sheep in the midst of wolves." Later, the symbolism of the shepherd protecting his flock from wolves became traditional in the early church. In Acts 20:28-29, Paul instructs the elders or bishops of Ephesus to feed their flock because fierce wolves were coming who would not spare the sheep. "The parallelism to John's parable is doubly interesting if John was written at Ephesus."⁷⁴ There is no need to identify the wolves with the Pharisees even if the parable is told against them. As in all parables, every detail cannot be allegorical. Augustine and others had tried to interpret the wolf as symbolizing the devil. There is a way in which the wolf can be taken to symbolize all forces of evil, but this is far from the thought of the Evangelist in John 10.

Jesus repeats in the first person singular that unlike the robbers, thieves and hirelings, He is the good shepherd. In addition to laying down his life for the sheep, he knows them and they know him. "I know my own and my own know me." This is again repeated in verse 27. This is one of the good marks of a good shepherd (cf. v. 3). The reciprocal knowledge exists between the shepherd and the sheep because of the relationship between them. It is not expressly said that the reciprocal knowledge is a result of the love the shepherd has towards the sheep. But this is implied by the fact that the former laid down

⁷⁴ Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 396.

his life for the latter. This assumption agrees with what Jesus says in another place in John. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This is why we must associate moral responsibility with both the concept of knowledge and "the laying down of life." It is because the hireling fails in his moral responsibility that he flees at the sight of the wolf. Jesus or the good shepherd, on the other hand, is morally bound not only to defend the sheep, but, if need be, to die for them.

Neither our time nor purpose allows us to go into the whole question of knowledge, which is a characteristic Johannine theme. But no doubt the present passage stresses the mutual knowledge of God and the believer. To know God is to have eternal life (17:3); to know the truth is to be set free (8:32). Knowledge, then, is a way of entrance into salvation and life. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them . . . and I give them eternal life. . . ." (10:27-28).

Verse 16: "And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd."

This verse, according to Bultmann is an interruption and therefore a secondary gloss inserted by the editor.⁷⁵ This is not strange since he regards the whole of verses 15b-18 as an interruption to the main discourse. We do not share this assumption, because as we said before, the shepherd discourse seems to end in verse 39, though as we

⁷⁵Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

saw, not without difficulties. We have already examined the difficulties involved.

It is true that the idea of the "other sheep" is more intelligible from the standpoint of a Christian living at the end of the first century when the church had accepted the responsibility of preaching to the Gentiles as well. In short, we are not quite sure how much or how far our Lord taught this explicitly. The question of whether or not Jesus is concerned with the universal church in his teachings in the Synoptics and John is not settled yet. The question becomes more difficult when we observe that the only places we have explicit references to the idea of the universal church in the Synoptics, are in the Appendixes (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19). But in the main body of the Synoptics, we have such words of our Lord, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24; cf. 10:5, 6). In Mark 7:24, he says, "Let the children first be filled."

But these are only seemingly instances of Jewish particularism. They do not explicitly convey more than that Jesus regarded his mission as directed in the first instance to the Jews. In fact, there are many indications that both Matthew and Luke believe the Gentiles to be included within the redeeming purpose of Christ. The prophecies about Messiah being a light to the Gentiles are quoted (Matt. 4:16; 12:21; cf. Luke 2:32). The Roman centurion was commended for his faith (Matt. 8:10) as was the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:19). The saying "Many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" is in Matthew 8:11 and, in a different

context, in Luke 13:28.

Indeed when we come to John, we see that the Gentiles come in without argument and without trouble. Jesus stays two days with the Samaritan villagers, teaching them (4:40). He does not admit that descent from Abraham is a sufficient ground for spiritual self-satisfaction (8:39). He is approached by a party of Greeks (12:20f.); He declares that he is the Light of the world (8:12), which implies that the Gentiles as well as the Jews are the objects of his enlightening grace. And so in the present passage (10:16), Jesus, in like manner, declares that he has "other sheep" besides the Jews, while it is not to be overlooked that he puts them in the second place: "Them also I must lead or bring" (cf. Rom. 1:16). They, as he repeats in verse 27, will hear his voice through his disciples, preachers and apostles.

It is strange that Jerome, in the Vulgate, translates ποῦμην as "fold" instead of "flock." αὐλῆ and ποῦμην are two different things. It is a mistranslation, but Barrett says that "it is not so misleading as is sometimes supposed."⁷⁶ But nevertheless, it has led to so much controversy. But suffice it to say that the weight of the manuscript evidence is against such a translation. According to Bernard, Jesus did not say, there would be one fold (αὐλῆ); He said one flock, which is different. "In one flock there may be many folds, all useful and each with advantages of its own, but the Flock is One,

⁷⁶Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

for there is only One Shepherd."⁷⁷

Schaff says that it is a shallow exegesis to say that the unity of the church, the universalism of the church, the word of Christ here was completely fulfilled in the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in the apostolic church.⁷⁸ It was indeed fulfilled then; (cf. Eph. 2:11-22 which looks like a good commentary on the passage) but it is also in an ever-expanding fulfillment, and like His sacerdotal prayer for the unity of all believers (Ch. 17), it reaches as a precious promise far beyond the present to the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles and such a glorious unity and harmony of believers as the world has never seen yet. Meyer says correctly, "The fulfillment of the sentence began with the apostolic conversion of the Gentiles; but it progresses and will only be complete with Romans 11:25f."⁷⁹

Verses 17-18: "For this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. . . ."

The laying down of Jesus' life for the sheep continues to recur (vv. 11, 15). However, the thought we have here is that the life is given or laid down in consequence of God's love for him. But as Bultmann warns us, we must beware of what he calls the "mythological language" which will bring us into believing that "Jesus had first to

⁷⁷Bernard, *op. cit.*, II, 363.

⁷⁸Philip Schaff (ed.) *The Gospel of John* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), p. 323.

⁷⁹Cited from *ibid.*

win the love of the Father (and consequently his own dignity) by his death."⁸⁰ For the Father loved him *πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου* (17:24). In fact, one might equally add that he surrenders his life because the Father loved him. Therefore, we agree with Bultmann that what is being emphasized here is that "in his sacrifice the Father's love for him is truly present, and that his sacrifice is therefore a revelation of the Father's love."⁸¹ The love of the Father for the Son is eternal.

The latter part of verse 17 and the first part of verse 18 stress the voluntary laying down of Jesus' life and his power to rise to take it again. In view of this fact, therefore, the death of Jesus was not an accident. This raises the whole question of Jesus' foreknowledge of his death and the authenticity of the Passion predictions, directly and indirectly in the Synoptics and John. It is not the purpose of our thesis to enter into this controversy, but we know that all the four Evangelists believe that Jesus voluntarily went to his death and, to him, it was not an accident. The expression of our Lord that he has power to take up his life again is not without its own difficulties too. Strachan says, "In the New Testament Jesus is never represented as rising again by his own power. The power is the power of God."⁸² Also, Hoskyns says, "Elsewhere throughout the New Testament (i.e. apart from here and 2:19) the Resurrection of Jesus is always

⁸⁰ Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: SCM Press, 1943), pp. 226-227.

referred to as an act of God"⁸³(Acts 2:24; Rom. 1:4). It is interesting that elsewhere, John uses the passive "was raised from the dead" (2:22; 21:14). It is undoubtedly the case that the New Testament prefers to speak of God as raising up Jesus, but Jesus several times, as we said above, predicted that he would rise (e.g. Mark 8:31; Luke 24:7) and there are some passages which say that he did rise (Acts 10:41; 17:3; I Thess. 4:14). However, the problem becomes less disturbing if we remember that Jesus and the Father are one (10:30). Therefore, we should not try to put an opposition between the Father and the Son in this matter. We recognize that the habitual New Testament expression is that the Father raised the Son, but at the same time, we should not overlook the fact that there is also a strand of New Testament teaching which says that the Son "rose." The present passage fits in with this strand. This is not strange for this is an important element of Johannine theology, that Jesus has "life in himself" and therefore able to rise without any outside help as it were.

It is likely that the more difficult reading is to be preferred, ἦρεν αὐτὴ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. ἦρεν is the reading of P45, *B (P75 is defective, but the editors think the space indicates ἦρεν). If so, the Lord speaks here, as he speaks also throughout Chapters 14-17 (e.g. 16:33, "I have overcome the world"), as though his death were already an accomplished fact. We should point out in passing, as Bultmann reminds us, that the freedom of Jesus, the voluntariness to go to his death is

⁸³Hoskyns, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

different from that expressed by the Stoics.⁸⁴ According to the Stoic doctrine, man has the ἐξουσία over his life and consequently the right to commit suicide. There is no reference in John 10:18 to ἐξουσία of this kind, "which is grounded in mankind."⁸⁵

"This commandment I have received from my Father." These words should be seen and understood in reference to Mark 8:31, "The Son of man must suffer." "Must" indicates not a blind, but a "seeing necessity, and means as here, voluntary fulfillment of the sovereign purpose of God."⁸⁶ The words ἐντολή and ἐντέλεσθαι are frequent in the latter part of John (and in I and II John). The Father gives a commandment to Jesus (10:18; 12:49f.; 14:31; 15:10) and he gives commandments to his disciples (13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 14). The characteristic ("new") commandment of Jesus is that his disciples should love one another (13:34; 15:12, 17). The word ἐντολή, therefore, "sums up the Christian doctrine of salvation from its origin in the eternal love of God, manifested in Jesus to the mutual love of Christians in the church."⁸⁷ Jesus himself found complete freedom of action, it will seem, in obedience (v. 18a).

Verses 19:21: "There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. . . ."

We saw at the beginning of this chapter that Bernard connects

⁸⁴Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁸⁷Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

this section with 9:41 and Bultmann regards it as "an appropriate conclusion to the complex"⁸⁸ on the discourse on the light. All the discourses on light in John need not be put together in the form of a single discourse according to Bultmann's thought. We have said that this distortion of John 10 is unnecessary. We have sufficient reason to believe that the σχίσμα can be, and is actually caused by τοὺς λόγους τούτους, that is, by the parable of the shepherd and the discourse that follows it. Both Bernard and Bultmann feel (and in our judgment, it remains only a feeling) that the σχίσμα is caused directly by the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9. As always if the words of Jesus cannot call forth faith in the audience, they must provoke division and anger. For this reason, we know that the word πάλιν in verse 19 evidently refers to 9:16.

Since the title of shepherd, as we noted in Chapter II above, is frequently applied to God and the future Messiahs in the Old Testament, the designation of the Good Shepherd in the manner in which Jesus refers it to himself must have contained a clear reference to his Messianic dignity. Precisely, this claim together with the thought of the death of Jesus and the call of the heathen world could only provoke repudiation and hate if we consider the attitude of the official Jewish circles. We shall consider this in more detail in verse 24 below. To them, such discourses sound like the speech of a madman. For this reason they pronounce Jesus to be a man who is raving and in

⁸⁸Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

whom no sensible person takes any interest. Nevertheless, there is a small minority who cannot shut their minds to the logic of facts, to the miracle and the discourse following upon it (cf. 7:43; 9:16; Matt. 10:34-36).

The reference to demons may reflect Mark 3:21-27 where Jesus is accused of being possessed by Beelzebub (cf. Matt. 11:18; Luke 7:33; John 7:20; 8:48; Matt. 12:29; 9:34; Acts 26:24). Professor Titus brings out an interesting point in this connection. He says:

Reference to demons stand out in bold relief in this Gospel, for it has suppressed the tradition that Jesus was an exorcist. The absence of this strain of tradition may be part of the evangelist's efforts to dissociate Jesus from magic.⁸⁹

The question, "Can a demon open the eyes of the blind man?" which concludes this section, confirms our earlier suggestion that we cannot separate this passage on the Good Shepherd from the discourse on the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9.

Verses 22-30: "It was the feast of the Dedication . . . So the Jews gathered round him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.' . . ."

We have already seen earlier in this chapter the problem that confronts us concerning the confusion between the feast of Tabernacles mentioned in 7:2, and that of the Dedication in 10:22. We may repeat, however, that the combination or conflation of the two feasts is not a sufficient reason to regard verse 18 as the end of the shepherd discourse for the reasons noted earlier. The crucial verse here, however,

⁸⁹Titus, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

is verse 24, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Although this demand comes in the shepherd discourse in John, it resembles the account we have in the Synoptics of the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin when the high priest asked from him if he is the Messiah. Luke's account is particularly close to John's and may be compared with Luke 22:67, "If you are the Christ, tell us." The answer of Jesus to the people's demand here in Luke is virtually the same as John's. In John we have, "I told you, and you do not believe"; in Luke we have, "If I tell you, you will not believe." The demand of the people that Jesus should now speak to them *παρησια* obviously reflects and confirms the fact that what we have in John 10:1-5 is *παροιμία*, at least as far as the Jews were concerned.

The next question is why it remains a *παροιμία* if the shepherd figure of speech is familiar to the Jews in the Old Testament literature and experience. Already in Ezekiel 34:23 and elsewhere the shepherd is a symbol for the Davidic king. One possible answer is that both in the Synoptics and John, Jesus never answers the direct question about his Messiahship without a qualification. For one thing Jesus' view of messiahship is different from that of the Jews. To the Jews, it has nationalistic and political overtones (e.g. Ps. Sol. 17:21-25). There he breaks sinners into pieces and shatters unjust rulers, so we have a warlike messiah. For another as we indicated before, Jesus' answer to the question about the messiah is almost always obscure. An obvious example is his answer in verse 30, "The Father and I are one." This answer is "affirmative in tone but not phrased in traditional

terminology."⁹⁰

The phrase, "How long will you keep us in suspense" is worthy of notice. Literally, it means, "how long will you take our soul, breath or life?" Hoskyns suggests that in order to maintain a sequence of thought, the literal meaning should be preserved.⁹¹ In this way, Hoskyns sees a connection between the phrases "lay down my life," "take it again," "takes it away from me," and the literal translation of ἕως πότε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις. In this way, according to Hoskyns, the Jews perceive the application of the parable of the Good Shepherd to be linked with the death of Jesus with the emergence of the new people of God, and they see also that this involves the destruction of Judaism as an independent political and religious organism (cf. 11:47-54). If Hoskyns is right, it will only confirm the two opposite impressions of the Jews, the opponents of Jesus and the Evangelists, about the Messiah. To the Evangelists, Judaism is fulfilled and superseded, but to the Jewish opponents, it is destroyed (see again 11:47-54 above; cf. also the interpretation of the turning of water into wine in 2:1f.).

The full answer of Jesus to the question about the Messiahship continues in verse 25. Jesus points to the works, perhaps the signs he performed, as evidence of his messiahship. This kind of approach occurs in a different situation when John the Baptist sent to Jesus to inquire whether or not he was the expected One (Matt. 11:2f.). The

⁹⁰Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 406

⁹¹Hoskyns, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

reason given by Jesus for the unbelief of the Jews is interpreted differently by commentators. "You do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep" (v. 26). Bultmann sees here "the peculiarly Johannine concept of predestination."⁹² Chrysostom comments, "If ye follow me not, it is not because I am not a shepherd, but because ye are not my sheep."⁹³ Hoskyns thinks that there is no formal doctrine of predestination here, but rather it describes a general behavior with which the behavior of the true disciples of Jesus is contrasted.⁹⁴ We share this view. Any notion of predestination here defeats the whole purpose of Christ's message, death and resurrection as understood by his followers, the Christians (cf. 3:16). The reference to the sheep in verses 26-29 connects this section with the previous section of the shepherd parable and the discourse that follows. The reference, "I give them eternal life" (v. 28) has the same notion as, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (v. 10). Similarly, "and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (v. 28b) carries the same thought of the wolf metaphor in verse 12, and hence, a further proof of the continuity of the narrative.

The text in verse 29 is puzzling. Barrett gives a list of the words appearing between $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ and $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ as follows:⁹⁵

⁹²Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

⁹³See Hoskyns, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

ὁ δέδωκέν μοι πάντων μεῖζον, B (it vg) boh; ὁ δέδωκέν μοι πάντων μεῖζων, W Sah; ὅς δέδωκέν μοι μεῖζων πάντων, W Sin pesh hl; ὅς δέδωκέν μοι μεῖζον πάντων Θ; ὁ δεδωκώς μοι πάντων μεῖζων, D. The general meaning of all the readings is, however, the same. The Father is the only source of the ultimate security of the believers in Jesus. The sheep belong to Jesus because they have been given to him by the Father. The latter part of verses 28 and 29 anticipates the unity of the Father and the Son in verse 30: "no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (v. 28b), "no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (v. 29b). The unity of the Father and the Son in verse 30 is a "unity of power and operation."⁹⁶ There is no doubt that it was an affirmation such as found in verse 30 that ultimately led the fourth century church to the doctrine of the one divine nature in the Trinity, nature being the essence considered as a principle of operation (cf. 14:9).

Verses 31-39: "The Jews took up stones again to stone him . . . but he escaped from their hands."

This section should be compared with 8:13-20. The Jews, in the words of Bultmann, "are caught out at their own game. The symbolical nature of the scene . . . represents the struggle of the revelation with the world."⁹⁷ The Jews caught up stones and raised them high in

⁹⁶Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 407.

⁹⁷Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

the air, ἐβόστασαν. The action of the Jews here is not new. Statements of Jesus which associate him with God have provoked similar opposition and antagonism (5:17-18; 8:58-59). In verse 32 as seen in verse 25, Jesus refers to his works as a way of confronting the opposition. καλα ἔργα should be understood here as the works of love. This again reinforces our earlier suggestion that the parable of the Good Shepherd cannot be separated from the ethical teaching of Jesus, an aspect that will later be discussed in full.

We see in verse 33 that Jesus, for the first time, was officially charged with blasphemy. It was only implied in 8:59; we do not have a specific charge. In the Synoptics, the charge of blasphemy was made at Jesus' trial (Mark 14:64; Matt. 26:65). The question is, what constitutes blasphemy in the Jewish Law of this period? In our present passage, we know that Jesus was reproached and charged for two things. First, he places God on a par with himself and this they called blasphemy. Secondly, he makes himself God. In this they think they recognized the false prophet, although both ideas undoubtedly play into each other. A thorough study of the Gospels reveals that there is more involved than the claim of Jesus that he was the Messiah. Namely, there was the accusation of blasphemy. John, however, is more specific; he says that it is because he made himself equal with God (cf. 5:18). It is sometimes thought that this charge cannot be historical since according to the Mishnah, it was necessary to pronounce the sacred name for a man to be guilty of blasphemy. The Sanhedrin states, "The blasphemer is not culpable unless he pronounces the Name

itself."⁹⁸ There is no evidence that Jesus did exactly this. In any case, there is a broader interpretation of blasphemy, based on passages like Numbers 15:30f., Deuteronomy 21:22 and Leviticus 24:16. This present passage in John may have come under this wider influence. But in any case, Jesus' enemies were anxious to be rid of him and would not "boggle at legal niceties."⁹⁹

There are various interpretations of Psalm 82:6 quoted by Jesus in verse 34f. However, the citation is exact (agreeing both with the Hebrew and LXX). Morris says the passage refers to the judges of Israel, and that the expression "gods" is applied to them in the exercise of their high and God-given office.¹⁰⁰ Emerton takes "gods" to refer to beings who "were regarded as angels by the Jews, but as gods by the Gentiles."¹⁰¹ A. T. Hanson takes the Rabbinic view that the Psalm was spoken to Israel by God at Sinai. He thinks that John thought of the pre-existence Word, rather than God, as addressing the Jews, and that this gives the citation relevance:

If to be addressed by the pre-existent Word justifies men in being called gods, indirect and mediated though that address was (coming perhaps through Moses, certainly written down only through David) far more are we justified in applying the title Son of God to the human bearer of the pre-existent Word, sanctified and sent by the Father as he was, in unmediated and direct presence.¹⁰²

⁹⁸Mishnah, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

⁹⁹Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 525.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹J. A. Emerton, "Some New Testament Notes," *Journal of Theological Studies*, XI (1960), 329f.

¹⁰²A. T. Hanson, "John's Citation of Psalm LXXXII," *New Testament Studies*, XI (1964-65), 161.

Perhaps Jesus was arguing as the rabbis did from *a minori ad maius* ("from the lesser to the greater"). The reason why the judges could be called gods was because they were vehicles of the word of God (v. 35). But on that premise, Jesus deserves so much more to be called God. He is the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world and thus a unique vehicle of the word of God. So if in any sense, the judges would be called gods, how much more properly he "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" would also.

Brown brings out an interesting point here regarding the consecration of Jesus. He sees this in terms of a "replacement theme" (Chs. 5-10).¹⁰³ On the Sabbath feast (Ch. 5), Jesus insisted that there could be no Sabbath rest for the Son since he must continue to exercise even on the Sabbath the powers of life and judgment entrusted to him by the Father. At the Passover (Ch. 6), Jesus replaced the manna of the Passover-Exodus story by multiplying bread as a sign that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven. At the Tabernacles (Chs. 7-9), the water and light ceremonies were replaced by Jesus, the true source of living waters and the light of the world. Now at the feast of Dedication, recalling, as we saw, in particular, the Maccabean dedication or consecration of the temple altar, but more generally reminiscent of the dedication or consecration of the whole series of temples that had stood in Jerusalem, Jesus proclaims that he is the one who has truly been consecrated by God. "This seems to

¹⁰³Brown, *op. cit.*, I, 411.

be an instance of the Johannine theme that Jesus is the new Tabernacle (1:14) and the new Temple (2:21)"¹⁰⁴ (cf. Jer. 1:5; Heb. 5:5).

In verses 37 and 38, Jesus refers again to the works which manifest him as the Messiah, as the Son of God (cf. v. 25). This is another proof that he and the Father are one: "The Father is in me and I am in the Father." Schaff thinks, however, that this is not the full import of that oneness with the Father, declared by Christ in verse 30 above, but "the living manifestation of it in his works." There seems to be little or no difference between the meaning of the words of Jesus in verses 30 and 38b. The implication of what Jesus says in both verses is that, if they would not harden themselves, they would be in a condition to take knowledge of that revelation in the works, and their further progress in faith be assured. The Father is in Christ by revelation (cf. ἐν χριστῷ in Paul's theology).

In verse 39, at the conclusion of the parable of the shepherd and the discourse that follows, we are told that, "Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands" (cf. 7:30, 32, 44; 8:59; cf. Luke 4:30). Perhaps John intends his readers to think of a miraculous escape. "The reader must read between the lines to learn that Jesus' 'hour' has not yet come (7:30; 8:20)."¹⁰⁵ No doubt John sees at the end of this discourse a fulfillment of verses 28 and 29: "and no one shall snatch them out of my hand"; "and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." "If the sheep of Jesus cannot

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

be snatched out of his hand, how much less can the enemy have power over the Shepherd of the sheep, until the time should come for him to deliver himself into their hand and to lay down his life"¹⁰⁶ (John 10: 17-18; cf. 18:14).

The Relation of Jesus as Shepherd to His Death

Earlier in this chapter, we said that though the term "lamb" is not in John 10, there is a way in which the two terms shepherd and lamb are related. We said in effect that as a lamb, Jesus carried away our sins and as a shepherd, he led the way for us into the Kingdom of God. The implications of this were considered above in relation to John 1:29 and Revelation 5:6; 7:1; 8:1; etc. Our purpose is not to enter into the whole question of the atonement as we understand it in the New Testament. But it is beneficial merely to bring together some of the indications in the text of John 10:1-39 discussed above in terms of Jesus as the Shepherd and the relation, if any, to His death.

Bultmann argues that the traditional and common Christian interpretation of Jesus' death as an atonement for sins is not what determines John's view of it.¹⁰⁷ According to him the phrase "take away" (ἀρᾶν) in John 1:29 means "remove" or "carry away." It does not mean "take upon himself." It is true that John and Paul see the meaning of the death of Jesus differently, but it is our view that the idea of Jesus

¹⁰⁶ Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 393-394.

¹⁰⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), II, 53.

as the lamb in John 1:29 carries with it the notion of sacrifice. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility that the death of Jesus stands at the back of the mind of the Evangelist or John the Baptist by the declaration, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

This reinforces the uniqueness of John 10 mentioned earlier. John is unique in its idea that the shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Here, the idea that τίθεναι τὴν ψυχὴν is meant to indicate only a subjective willingness to "risk," "pledge" or "stake" one's life cannot be right; it is "perhaps to press the Evangelist's logic too relentlessly into the mold of a general and pragmatic definition of "shepherd."¹⁰⁸ Actually, the Christ-event (with its culmination in death) governs the presentation and not infrequently threatens to break through the confines of the categories employed.

We noted in the text the contrast between διὰ τῆς θύρας ἀλλαχόθεν as the criteria by which the "shepherd of the sheep" is distinguished from a thief and a robber. Therefore, we agree with Meyer that it is "virtually impossible to avoid the conclusion that θύρα is here used to refer not to the person of Christ but to his death as a means of his passage εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τῶν προβατῶν 'into the enclosure, abode of the sheep.'"¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to observe the kind of progressive development of ideas we have in John as a whole about Jesus' life in relation to his death and in particular his role as a shepherd

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

in relation to his death.

Once again, let us observe the phrase ἀναβάνειν (literally, "to ascend from another point"). Meyer points out that it makes the reference to Christ's death clearer still, especially when we remember how John uses it in his gospel.¹¹⁰ This phrase is used by John for the lifting up of Jesus, ὑψωθῆναι. What John means by this is the returning of Jesus to the Father and his entry into his glory. "The point of contrast is therefore that a legitimate claim to be shepherd rather than thief must rest on legitimate entry, via death."¹¹¹ At this stage, it may be said that a reference to death is obscure (10:6). But it becomes clearer as we proceed (cf. 3:13; 6:62). We see a much more clearer picture still in 10:11-18, especially in verses 11 and 15, as we have seen before. Then we can see the climax just before the Passion Narratives begin: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (12:24).

In like manner, it is not only the shepherd voice that gathers together the scattered sheep and constitutes them into one flock (10:16), the laying down of his life is also necessary to this end (10:11; 15, 17). Although Jesus' death cannot, according to the terms of the allegory, be represented in a sacrificial aspect, the thought is expressed that it avails not only to save the life of the sheep from the wolf's attack (10:12), but to give them more abundant life (10:10). We can see

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

how important this conception was for John in 11:50-52. "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. . . ." The Evangelist here interprets Caiphas' astute council as a prophecy of Jesus' death as a sacrifice for the nation, and more particularly, as the covenant sacrifices which constituted the scattered children of God as people.

The discourse that follows the shepherd parable makes it clear that Jesus' death as a covenant sacrifice has reference solely to the covenant people. Although John makes it clear on a number of occasions that his saving work is for the whole world, it is effectual only for those who stand within the covenant relationship. "But you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep" (10:26). We know that the Old Testament has the idea of the covenant to be that of a peculiar and exclusive privilege. We could say this about the new covenant also. It is in certain respects likewise exclusive, though only to those who were self-excluded (cf. the parable of the sheep and the goats) and were excluded (cf. John 12:47f.).

We may ask the same question which we have asked before, namely, how will Jesus give life more abundant, eternal life to his sheep when he lays down his life, when he died for the very purpose of giving them life? There are three possible answers to this. One is answered in the text of John 10 itself (cf. vv. 17 and 18 with vv. 11 and 15). Jesus has the power to take up his life (or, if you like, God will raise him from the dead) again. This leads us to the second answer to the question. This answer has to do with the whole question of how

John sees the death and crucifixion of Jesus. He sees both as glorification as we have noted before. Therefore, it must be re-emphasized that Jesus' laying down his life, his death, cannot be understood apart from his resurrection. Because of his death for the sheep and his consequent resurrection (the taking up of his life), he will be in a better position to protect his sheep. Nobody will be able to snatch them both from his hand and the Father's hand (cf. his promises in 14:3f.). His sheep are therefore everlastingly secured and the promise and assurance of giving to them life more abundant remains. The third possibility has to do with one of the New Testament concepts of death. Death itself is a power, that is, the triumph of weakness. The death of Jesus is conceived in terms of removing sin and it therefore removed death itself. Life grew out of it. As Christ was dead, so he became alive (I. Thess. 4:14).

The Ethical Dimension of the Term; the Idea of the Imitation of God [Jesus]

In the previous section on exegesis, we suggested that Jesus was following the rabbinic pattern of teaching in his reference to Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34f. If this is right, then Jesus was arguing according to the rabbinic rule of hermeneutics which was prevalent in his time. As a background to this thought, our starting point will be the rabbinic Judaism as we consider the ethical dimension of the term "good shepherd" as applied to the words of Jesus in John 10.

But we may point out briefly our reason for starting with the rabbis rather than the Old Testament itself. In the Old Testament

God is incomparable and inimitable in being and action. Isaiah 46:5 states, "To who will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that may be alike?" To make oneself equal to God in the Old Testament thinking is the result of sinful human arrogance such as in the oriental idea of the divine king (cf. Isa. 14:12-14). "The rabbis are the first to bring the idea of imitation of God to the Old Testament."¹¹²

For instance, in IV Maccabees 9:23, during a torture, the eldest cries out to his brothers μιμήσασθε με ἀδελφοί "take me as example." The full quotation states, "Follow my example, o brothers; Do not desert me and forswear not our brotherhood in nobility of soul." In 13:9, the statement is put on the lips of the seven young men: "Let us die like brothers, o brethren, for the Law. Let us imitate the three children at the Assyrian court who despised this same ordeal of the furnace."¹¹³ Although the reference here, as Michaelis points out, is to martyrdom, "μιμέομαι cannot be understood as a technical term for a certain view of martyrdom."¹¹⁴

However, in rabbinic Judaism, the rabbis were known and regarded as the living Torah. And the imitation of Christ either in Paul or in John, or in the Synoptics, for that matter, cannot be divorced from the imitation of the rabbis as the "living Law" in Judaism. The

¹¹²W. Michaelis, "μιμέομαι, μιμητής, συμμιμητής," in Kittel, *op. cit.*, IV, 663.

¹¹³Translation quoted from R. H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), II, 676f.

¹¹⁴Michaelis, *op. cit.*, IV, 663.

life of the rabbi was itself Torah. Hence, it is not enough to learn the words of a rabbi, but it is necessary to follow him (as the sheep follow the good shepherd), to live with him, so to absorb his thoughts and copy his every gesture.¹¹⁵ To follow a rabbi was to become his pupil (ἀκολουθεῖν, δευτε ὀπίσω). What this means is that in antiquity what was narrated concerning the fathers had a practical purpose; that of providing examples to be emulated, warning or other definite lessons. We can be sure then, that Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian traditions preserved in writing their different literature, not only to proclaim the message of salvation but to preserve it for posterity either in the form of ethics or teachings. This is an opposition to the view of M. Dibelius. He maintains that these literatures were preserved only to proclaim the message of salvation. In the rabbinic tradition the pupil had to "absorb all the traditional wisdom with 'eyes, ears and every member' by seeking the company of a Rabbi, following him and imitating him, and not only by listening to him."¹¹⁶ The pupil is therefore a witness to his teacher's words, he is a witness to his actions as well. He does not only say, "I heard from my teacher" but also, "I saw my teacher do this or that." In this way, the word and deed of the rabbi in the words of Gerhardsson, become "The Rabbis' didactic symbolical actions."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ See W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), p. 455.

¹¹⁶ Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1961), p. 183.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

By clear implication also, Jesus did not only intend that his words, in this case, "I am the good shepherd," be learned but that they all may follow in his steps, "the sheep follow him," as the good shepherd. Moral responsibility is therefore involved. If they are morally good as the Good Shepherd, they are morally bound to follow the leader, the good shepherd, to be good shepherds, to care for, and nurture the sheep.

We see in the New Testament that the emphasis has changed from the Torah of which the rabbis are examples and others imitators of them. It has changed to the words and works of Jesus. His work and words have become normative, that is, they take the place of both the Torah and the Rabbis. And hence, Jesus' words and works are now to be imitated. In fact, his works and words are now equal to himself (see John 10:25f.).

The disciples, the Christians should be conformed to the person whose words are, "I am the good shepherd"(cf. Matt. 5:48). The demand for *imitatio Dei* becomes that for *imitatio Christi*. To be sure the life which Jesus will give to the sheep (John 10:11, 28) is one of following him, a life of imitating him in a way that the marks of the life of Jesus are traceable in that of the followers. "Thus the ethical norm for Christians is not only the words but the life of him who uttered the words."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹¹⁸Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

The shadow of Jesus' own life is in his sayings, he is the Good Shepherd, he cares, he protects, but also lays down his life. As "sheep without a shepherd," he had compassion on them. So that the teaching on the good shepherd is set within a framework of healing and pity. We have earlier established that the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9 led to the teaching on the good shepherd in Chapter 10. From this perspective, even though the word "love" does not occur in Chapter 10, we know as we indicated before that it was the love of the shepherd for the sheep that is at the back of the parable in John 10. This is made explicit in 13:35 when Jesus says, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The two processes of learning in Judaism are the learning or teaching and the imitation of a life, that of the rabbi. They are obviously what Jesus intends for his disciples, his hearers, the Christians. When for example, Paul refers to himself as an imitator of Christ, he is doubtlessly thinking of Jesus as the Torah he has to copy, both in his words and deeds (I Cor. 11:1; cf. Phil. 3:17; cf. Heb. 6:12; Eph. 5:1).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer carried further the thought of Jesus laying down his life for the sheep as an example to be followed when he says, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."¹¹⁹ It is as if we hear Jesus say in a like manner, "I am the good shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep, follow my example, be good shepherds, lay

¹¹⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 8.

down your life for others." Now we can understand why the New Testament always speaks of our becoming "like Christ" (καθὼς χριστός). We have been transformed into the image of Christ, and are therefore destined to be like him. He is the "pattern" we must follow. Because He led the way as a shepherd, we too can "walk even as he walked" (I John 2:6), "do as he has done" (John 13:15), and "love as he has loved" (Eph. 5:2; John 13:34; 15:12). Therefore, we are able to follow the example he has left us (I Peter 2:21), lay down our lives for the brethren as he did (I John 3:16).

The disciple looks solely at his master. But when a man follows Jesus Christ and bears the image of the incarnate, crucified and risen Lord, when he has become the image of God, we may at last say that he has been called to be the 'imitator of God.' The follower of Jesus is the imitator of God. 'Be ye therefore imitators of God [Jesus], as beloved children' (Eph. 5:1).¹²⁰

Therefore, we may conclude that the whole background of the Parable of the Good Shepherd is not unlike the background of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-36), where the love of God towards the man who has fallen a victim to the brigands (the word is identical in both parables) is displayed not by leaders of Judaism (the Priest and the Levites), but by the Good Samaritan. The good samaritan is any one who listens and obeys the words of Jesus, the command to be a good shepherd as the chief shepherd himself. It is as if we hear Jesus say, "Go and do likewise, namely, like the Good Shepherd or the Good Samaritan."

Heretofore, in the exegesis and the discussions that followed,

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 198.

we saw that Jesus does not merely care, feed, and lead his flock, his sheep, but also lays down his life for them. We noted how, in the view of the Evangelist, this can be achieved by dying (laying down his life) and rising (taking up the life again), in order to give life everlasting to the sheep. We discovered also that this is not the only thing the Evangelist wants to convey to his first readers and us. He wants his readers, and hence those who choose to follow Jesus, to realize as well that Jesus acted and taught in this way in order to give an example to be followed. This aspect was investigated on our discussion based on the ethical dimension of the term shepherd, the idea of the imitation of God/Jesus. It is right, then, that we proceed from here to what all this means for the contemporary church. This will receive our attention in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE CONTEMPORARY MEANING OF JESUS AS SHEPHERD

Christ the Shepherd in Early Christian Art: The Catacomb

For our understanding of the importance of the shepherd motif in modern times, it is right and valuable for us to know what the concept means throughout the life of the church. This motif was retained in the Christian art in the catacombs, although there were initial problems as we shall see. The important thing, however, is that the church succeeded in retaining this important concept in Christian art, and so it survives until today as we see the picture of Jesus as the Shepherd on our stained windows in our churches. Then let us briefly note what stood in the way of the second century Christians for the acceptance of the use of symbols in general in the Christian worship and life.

The Old Testament prohibition of images (Ex. 20:4) was influential in this respect since the Old Testament itself was an accepted scripture of the Christians too. Origen, for example, refers to it in saying that "the Christians abominated temples, altars and images."¹ Also there was close connection between the art of antiquity and pagan worship. Evidently this was in the forefront of Tertullian's mind when he radically rejected Christian activity in this domain. The

¹Karl Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965), p. 286.

devil alone, he says, has sent sculptors and painters into the world.²

However, as time went on, Christian leaders and all Christians began to have a change of mind. This hostile tendency towards art and images could not prevail over the positive trend which succeeded in making an important advance in the third century. Tertullian knew Christians who possessed drinking vessels bearing the image of the Good Shepherd.³ Clement of Alexandria, for all his reserve regarding a representation of God or Jesus, nevertheless suggested to the Christians of his day some symbols which their signet rings might bear, such as the dove, the fish, the ship, the anchor, and the fisherman.⁴

Giving due regard to such favorable attitude towards art in the private domain, it was nevertheless the needs of liturgical worship in the stronger communities of the church as a whole which finally obtained for art an official recognition by ecclesiastical authority. The Good Shepherd was depicted, among other things in the tombs.⁵ In the catacomb itself, the earliest subjects were, for example, Daniel between the two lions in the den, Noah in the Ark, Jonah swallowed by the fish and cast out again or the New Testament scene of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Another contributory factor was the inclination of the Christians, surrounded by a widespread pagan cult of the dead, to express in artistic form on the tombs of their dead whatever their faith proclaimed to them concerning death and resurrection. There was also the

²*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 287.

desire on the part of the Christians to have a place of worship of their own where the worthy celebration of the eucharistic liturgy could be possible since the size of the congregation made this increasingly difficult in private houses. An undoubted example of a pre-Constantine Christian church has been brought to light by excavations in Dura-Europos, a Roman frontier garrison on the west bank of the Euphrates built about 232.

The Christian character of this private house, adapted for use in divine worship, is clearly demonstrated by the frescos of a room which was perhaps used as a baptistery: they depict the Good Shepherd among tombs, the healing of the man born lame and Christ walking on the water.⁶

New possibilities of Christian artistic activity presented themselves when the church in the first half of the third century came into possession of her own burial grounds. The wall and ceiling surfaces in the grave chambers of the burial ground and catacombs were furnished with pictures. The painters were naturally dependent in form on contemporary secular art, but their choice of themes was mostly determined by the Holy Scripture or other Christian sources. No doubt, they must all be understood as references to the Biblical accounts of the saving of a man from deadly peril, and consequently aim at proclaiming the Christian hope of entering into eternal life, safe from all peril and threat from the powers of evil.

Proceeding from the same current of ideas is the interesting figure of the Good Shepherd, which is found in the early catacomb paintings and in the epitaphs. In this instance, Christ is seen as

⁶*Ibid.*

the Saviour who, as a shepherd, brings life and as a teacher, brings true knowledge of God. And so the third century had already, in various ways laid the foundation of the flourishing art of the Christian empire in the following century.

In the last chapter, we noted the great christological affirmation in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd." It is this assertion which has given the catacomb symbol its name and which basically governs its meaning. The basic christological intent of the symbol in the catacomb is what is still relevant for us in the church today. Lowrie describes it in these words:

It represented, of course, the faithful care of the divine shepherd in seeking the souls which had strayed into sin, and bearing them back to his church; but it also represented his power to bear aloft to his heavenly kingdom the soul which was wounded, weary, and bruised with the struggle here below.⁷

Mrs. Conklin tells us similarly that the carrying of the lost sheep by the shepherd on his shoulders also has a funerary meaning. She said, in the ancient liturgy, "there was a prayer to the effect that the soul of the departed 'might be carried on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd,' which was followed by the mention of sheep and the heavenly Paradise."⁸ The care of the shepherd for the sheep seems dominant in the use of the shepherd symbol in the catacomb, but it

⁷Walter Lowrie, *Monuments of the Early Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), p. 218.

⁸Faith Joanne Conklin, "Early Christian Art: The Basis for a Contemporary Approach to Christology through Symbolism" (unpublished Rel. D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, June 1971), p. 77.

will not be true to assume that the church forgot or abandoned the sacrificial aspect of it.

Thus, as Mrs. Conklin points out, the Good Shepherd as a Christological symbol refers to Christ's care and concern for his church (his sheep), but it also testifies to the manner in which that love was made to manifest, namely through his death and resurrection. The symbol becomes, for the Christian community then and now, a reminder of his Passion and an assurance of the new and eternal life through Christ as the "great shepherd of the sheep."⁹ With this in mind, we shall proceed to consider the pastoral work of the church today.

The Pastoral Work of the Church Today

In Chapter III, we consider the shepherd/sheep relationship in two directions, the leader as a shepherd and the congregation as the flock. We shall follow the same procedure as we consider the pastoral work and life of the contemporary church of today.

Once again, we remind ourselves of the meaning of "shepherd." The shepherd is the pastor. Shepherd and pastor have the same meaning. If Christ is the Good Shepherd, we shall take him throughout as our Friend, our Teacher, and our Guide. In the Episcopal Church, it is not merely a happy coincidence that when a priest of the church is made bishop, the Prayer Book Service refers to him as being "the shepherd" and the people he oversees as "the flock." The concept of the shepherd

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 80.

and his flock, as we have discussed in the previous chapters, is rooted in both the Old and the New Testament languages. The Psalms speak of Yahweh as the shepherd of the flock. Later the concept is repeated by Ezekiel, who reminds the rulers of Israel that a shepherd's duty is to lead his flock, and by Zechariah, that a shepherd's task is to feed his sheep.

The Duty of the Pastor in the Contemporary Church

In Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd, he refers to the dual commissions of leading and feeding. Although the setting of the shepherd parables in the Synoptics and John, is based on the rural life of a shepherd, in our modern urban and technical society, where many of us see sheep only when they are being cared for comfortably in children's zoos, the image of the spiritual ruler as one who leads and feeds his flock still remains.

In relating the allegory of the Good Shepherd, Jesus found it necessary, however, to give warning. The warning cannot be treated as a thing of the past. The pastors or leaders of the church today should regard this as their own. Jesus reminded his listeners that there were those who had entered God's sheepfold, his earthly community, the church, not by the door through which the legitimate shepherd enters, but by the back door. These false shepherds had taken their places in the fold another way and had taken what did not belong to them, cunningly and deceitfully. As Ezekiel had warned earlier about the rulers of Israel, these false shepherds were cruel and unconcerned. Like the

hirelings who have no concern for their sheep, they had permitted the flock to stray and as Zechariah's warning they had illegally kept God's riches and rewards for themselves.

What is the implication of this? The answer may lie in the fact that these hirelings, as some if not the majority of today's pastors or ministers, enter, as it were, into the fold, into the church with their own selfish motif, not with the motif of caring, of feeding, and, if need be, of laying down their life for the sheep. If Oscar Cullmann is right on his view on the good shepherd in John 10, these modern church leaders or pastors could be compared with the Zealots of Jesus' day. Cullmann says to the effect that the false shepherds or the hirelings are the zealots who delivered their followers over to the Romans to be slaughtered¹⁰ (cf. John 10:8). The false shepherds ("hirelings"), says Jesus, does not spare the life of the sheep whereas the true shepherd "lays down his life for his sheep." According to Cullmann's suggestion, this may be based upon an authentic saying of Jesus. Even if the martyrdom of certain zealot leaders must be acknowledged, the Gospel of John clearly distinguishes the sacrifice of Jesus from theirs: "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (v. 18).

Therefore the criteria for the good shepherd, the shepherd of the soul, cannot be isolated from other teachings of our Lord. He brings good news to the poor. He binds up the hearts that are broken.

¹⁰Oscar Cullmann, *Jesus and the Revolutionaries* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 36.

He proclaims liberty to captives and those in prison. He announces the available grace of God. He leads the flock in the way of truth and feeds them (cf. Luke 4:18-19). This may remind us of Jesus' words to Peter after his resurrection (John 21:15f.). To the thrice-repeated denial, Peter answered the thrice-repeated question as to his love toward Jesus and the flock, the sheep, the church. The thrice-repeated charge covers the whole sphere of pastoral activities; "Feed my lambs," "Tend my sheep," and "Feed my sheep." As modern leaders of the flock of Christ, we are to obey his command: "Feed my sheep," "Tend my sheep." The modern pastor is still entrusted to the two mandates given to the genuine shepherd: to lead the community of Christ in truth and mutual trust, and to nourish the spiritual and physical lives of the waiting flock.

What made Jesus a shepherd, the Good Shepherd? There is no doubt in the minds of the Evangelist that it is the love of the shepherd for the sheep and the flock, the church and the whole world. We tried to establish in our discussion of the text of John 10, that even if the word "love" is not found there, we still cannot speak of Jesus as the good shepherd without his love for them, which, according to our conviction, was the motivation behind the shepherd/sheep parable and the discourse that follows. It looks like a contradiction in terms to ask whether or not the pastor, the leader of the church is not more interested in his theology, in his dogma than his love, care, admonition of the sheep.

It is our contention that our modern time demands a new

conception of religion, a shift from the belief in mere dogmas, sacraments, even mere prayers, to the love, care of our fellowmen, shepherding of our fellowman. Otherwise we may come to the point where both clergy and lay people are mere "Christian atheists" or at least should be regarded as such. This is part of what Narayan Vaman Tilak, one of the noblest Indian Christians of our age, means when he said to his friends from the West, "Pack up all your doctrines and let us first find Christ."¹¹

Let us reflect again for a moment on the Parable of the Lost Sheep in the Synoptics. (Luke 15:3-7 par. Matt. 18:12-14.) According to Luke, the parable was occasioned by the Pharisees' indignant question, "Why does he receive sinners (into his house), and admit them to his table-fellowship?" (Luke 15:2). In Luke, it closes with the words, "Thus God (at the Last Judgment) will have more joy over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine just persons who have no need of repentance" (15:7). But in Matthew, the parable has an entirely different audience. It is not addressed as in Luke to Jesus' opponents, but to his disciples, according to Matthew 18:1. Hence, the concluding sentence in Matthew has a corresponding different emphasis. It runs, "Thus it is not the will of God that even one of the very least should be lost" (18:14). This emphasis becomes more interesting if we admit that Matthew was written in the interest of the church. It means the opponents in Luke and interestingly in John, to whom the parable of

¹¹C. F. Andrews, *The Good Shepherd* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 22.

the shepherd was addressed, are now the leaders of the church (the disciples).

Therefore, when the conclusion in Matthew is brought into the context of the admonition not to despise one of the least (Matt. 18:10), and of the instruction concerning the discipline of an erring brother (vv. 15-17), the concluding sentence clearly means: It is God's will that you, the disciples, the modern pastors or clergy, should go after your apostate brother as persistently as the shepherd of the parable seeks the lost sheep. Thus, in Matthew the parable is addressed to the disciples, to the pastors, "a call to the leader of the community [the church] to exercise faithful pastorship toward apostates."¹² The emphasis does not lie on the joy of the shepherd as in Luke, though that is significant, but on the example of his persistent search.

The following passage from the Reverend F. B. Meyer's book, "The Shepherd Psalm," may serve to illustrate what is true of Jesus, the chief shepherd, and what should be true of the contemporary pastor:

He [Jesus] has a shepherd's heart, beating with pure and generous love that counted not his life-blood too dear a price to pay down as our ransom. He has a shepherd's eye, that takes in the whole flock, and misses not even the poor sheep wandering away on the mountains cold. He has a shepherd's faithfulness, which will never fail nor forsake, nor leave us comfortless, nor flee when he seeth the wolf coming. He has a shepherd's strength, so that he is well able to deliver us from the jaw of the lion, or the paw of the bear. He has a shepherd's tenderness; no lamb so tiny that he will not carry it; no saint so weak that He will not gently lead; no soul so faint that he will not give it rest. He pities as a father. He comforts as a mother. His gentleness

¹²Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 40.

makes great . . . Ah, he has done more! 'All we like sheep has gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way' . . . Therefore, because he was the Shepherd, he offered to give his own life and God laid on him the iniquity of us all.¹³

Another aspect of the work of the shepherd, the pastor which Jesus has committed to us (pastor and laity alike) and is worth considering, is the unity of the church. First, let us consider what is the intention, the mind of Jesus on this important aspect of the life of the church. In John 10:16, He says, "I have other sheep. . . . I must bring them also . . . so there shall be one flock, one shepherd." In John 17:21, our Lord prayed to the effect that "they [the followers, the church] may all be one."

The unity Jesus envisages for his church is based on the fact that he and the Father are one. "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." For the world to believe in what we preach, this unity is a must, "that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." However strange it may seem, the church after two thousand years of existence of Jesus' earthly life, still has to ask the question, why is the church divided, and as a result, what is the future of the church? If the future of the church is going to be what Jesus wants it to be, it is incumbent upon the church to "unite now or perish." This is not necessarily a prophecy of doom or a pessimistic opinion about the future of the church but it is to state the urgency of the case.

¹³Quoted from Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

It is the contemporary church, especially the clergy, that makes the desired unity an impossible task. The excuse given for disunity or barriers in the way of negotiations for unity among different denominations, is based primarily on theological ideologies. The lay people are less concerned about these trivials while the shepherds, the pastors, the clergy, and the theologians contend among themselves about their different theological convictions. Another barrier we cannot overlook has to do with racial prejudice. It is difficult, perhaps for us to understand what almost impassable barriers were overcome by Christian love and fellowship in those early days of the church. But if we had been present in spirit at the "Breaking of Bread" on the first day of the week, called the Lord's Day, and had been partakers in the Eucharist and had witnessed the kiss of Peace being given between Roman and slave, Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, in the unity of the One Body, we should have acknowledged that nothing less than a miracle had taken place to bring about this brotherhood which was being created in righteousness and true holiness in Christ Jesus (see Eph. 4:24).

The difficulties faced by the contemporary church may be of a different nature from those persecutions and tortures confronting the church of early and middle ages. But it will be self-deception if we pretend that the contemporary church has neither difficulties nor problems because it looks complacent. The bonds of unity thus firmly knit together were able to stand the hardest tests in those early days. In the arena, when persecution had reached its height, Christians

of different rank and race found through martyrdom a new union and fellowship that was closer than anything that had ever been known before. The unity of Christians and their Christian fortitude in face of persecutions made the rest of the world to respect and accept the faith as a new thing upon the earth and men envisaged a new kingdom of righteousness and joy and peace.

In our own day, after all these centuries, this unity in Christ has been challenged, not only in the Communist or Islamic countries, but within the church itself where barriers of different types had been created. There is a clash of color between the different races and, in consequence, Christianity itself has become a mockery. What we are witnessing is that churches have sprung up which are being held aloof from one another by social and religious taboos. It is where the common link of the One Fellowship, superseding race, is no longer visibly expressed in the breaking together of the One Bread and the sharing together of the One Cup. We pretend and, I would say deceive ourselves and purport to hold One Faith, and share One Baptism, worship One God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:5, 6), while we refuse Inter-Communion on religious and theological grounds.

This looks as a self-criticism of the church. But we have to face the urgency that the unity of the church (for which Jesus prayed, "the other sheep" he would bring "that there may be one Flock, one Shepherd") demands and this cannot be overemphasized. However, in fairness to the church, noble attempts have been made to recover the

unity and fellowship of the first days of the church when all who believed were of one heart and one soul and remained steadfast in the one fellowship and in the breaking of the one bread. But up to the present time, even where ecumenical conferences have met (e.g. the World Council of Church [W.C.C.], the All Africa Conference of Churches [A.A.C.C.]), there have been serious gaps in the Christian ranks, and agreement on such vital issues as inter-communion has not yet been reached. The New Humanity, as it were, has not become as yet truly visible on earth.

The consequence of all this is that we must admit that these cleavages within the body of Christ are the greatest hindrance to the acceptance of the Gospel message. This is a most serious thing. In Nigeria where I grew up as a Christian and was a parish priest for years, I would corroborate such an opinion. I recall a little episode during one of our annual two-week Evangelistic campaigns during my ministerial training. After a series of open air preaching at a particular locality, a would-be convert asked a series of questions such as the following: "What is your own brand of Christianity? Is this Jesus you are proclaiming different from the one proclaimed by the Jehovah's Witness here a couple of weeks ago?" These are startling and challenging questions. The questioner asked further, "What church do you advise me to go now?" I reluctantly told him to go to any church that is nearest to him, but what I really had in mind was the Anglican Church, my own denomination, and in which I hoped to become a pastor.

If, as Christ prayed so earnestly in the priestly prayer and desired, as a shepherd (John 10:16), that we had become one in the divine unity which he so contemplated, the world outside the church would have already believed and known that he had been sent from the Father to redeem and reconcile mankind. But with the sight of a divided Christendom, there is no such acknowledgment of his spiritual realm. According to our passage in John 10, Christ is the *Pastor Pastorum*, the Teacher of Teachers. Our duty, as the collect says, is to "follow the blessed steps of his most holy life." This duty should be done in all humility. In Chapter II, we discovered that among the rabbis, the shepherds were a despised group and were almost regarded as second class citizens. Yet Jesus was content to describe himself as the shepherd. Perhaps this was partly in the mind of Paul when he made use of that pre-Christian hymn in Philippians 2:5-11. "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped . . . but taking the form of a servant. . ." (2:6).

There is another aspect of the shepherd symbol that is often overlooked and worthy of notice. There is an allusion to this also in Chapter II. This aspect has to do with the assumption, if not the mistake, that because the shepherd is a symbol of comfort and assurance, the shepherd has nothing else to offer apart from it. But it must be borne in mind that the shepherd is also a vigorous protector and defender against threat. This notion was ably demonstrated in the Midrash picture of the shepherd (Chapter II) where Moses was reported to have restrained the strong sheep in the matter of grazing in order to secure

a proper justice for the weak. This seems to suggest a sterner quality of justice. In this connection, it is also the duty of the shepherd to separate the "sheep" from the "goats." The use of ἐκβάλλειν in John 10:4, as we pointed out earlier in Chapter IV, has the same connotation. This means that it is part of the legitimate duty of the shepherd to compel the reluctant sheep to leave the fold when it is necessary. All this is done for the good of the sheep. Indeed, the shepherd does what is necessary to achieve this objective, to protect the flock from the wolves. In the Old Testament, it is the risking of life for the sheep (Judg. 12:3f.; I Sam. 19:5; 28:21), but in the New Testament it is the laying down of the life of the shepherd for the sheep (John 10:11, 15).

In our time this would mean the expression of love and care in vigorous attacks on evil, and not the condoning of it. "The Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives" (Heb. 12:6). The wolves are often social institutions or exploiting structures of society. Also we see that the shepherd symbol today has political connotations. For example, a matter like closing the loopholes in taxation cannot be isolated from the "wolf" which has to be attacked or overcome. To do this will mean restraining the rich in order to secure justice for the poor and underprivileged. The achievement or execution of this kind of justice should not only be the concern of our religious leaders, but also of our political leaders. This means that all should be "shepherd-minded." The king was the political leader of the people of Israel and he was always pictured

as a shepherd (see Chapter II). Today this should not be different. So the shepherd symbol may become not only an expression of comfort, but also of controversy. This should cause concern if not a serious debate for the modern political and religious leaders, leading from theory to practice. Justice should not only be said to be done, but seen to be done.

From our study of the shepherd/sheep motif in the New Testament and the example of the Chief Shepherd himself, there are six distinctive qualifications a contemporary pastor should have: (1) He should enter by the door, his motive should be to care and nurture the church (John 10:1-2). (2) It is a must for him to know the sheep (John 10:14). If the pastor does not know his sheep or his flock (the church members), he cannot care for them intelligently. (3) He is to go before the sheep (John 10:4). This means he should have a sense of direction before he can direct or go before his flock. (4) He is to hear the voice of Jesus (10:3, 27). It is obvious that if the pastor himself does not hear the voice of our Good Shepherd calling him to follow faithfully, he shall not be able to make that call heard by those who seek his help in their hour of need. (5) The pastor is also to give his life (this means his talent and his time) for the sheep (John 10:11-13, cf. 3:16). (6) Lastly, he is commanded to go after those sheep that were lost (Luke 15:4). The good pastor is an unwearied seeker, "till he finds it." The joy of the return of a lost soul is a real thing for Jesus and God the Father who will not even wish that "one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:29).

Here, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter. Jesus himself has called us, saying, "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep." He has called us again, pleading with us, "I have compassion on the multitude, for they are as sheep having no shepherd." Again he pleads, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourer are few." We cannot hear these words and yet be complacent.

Jesus as the shepherd and consequently one who lays down his life (his death on the cross for the sake of the sheep and for the good of mankind) is not a thing of the past. Jesus is not simply an historical figure but a living reality that is, active in the present through us, his pastors, and for that matter, all Christians. This is exactly what the New Testament means by the life in Christ, the life in the Spirit. Then this should lead us to the task for the contemporary church as a whole.

The Task for the Contemporary Church, the Flock, the Congregation

In the previous section, we considered the contemporary pastor in relation to Jesus as the Shepherd. We did this because we believe that he stands in an unique position as Jesus stood uniquely among his disciples and the people. The separate considerations we give to the pastor (the shepherd) and the flock (the sheep), does not in any way prejudice our belief in the priesthood of all believers, a question which is beyond the scope of this thesis. But as Jesus says, "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Luke 13:48).

The church's task cannot be left to the church's leaders. Jesus

himself says the sheep "shall heed my voice" (John 10:16). This means the church, through all its members, must be ready to be used by Christ to do its work. In short, it is not only the pastor, the World Councils, nor great Assemblies that can fulfill the Christian task, the local congregation has a supreme part to play and the better they recognize their task as that of shepherding and of caring, the better they can do it.

The church is called not only to proclaim the love of Christ, but to manifest it in the lives of all its members and in the lives of the world at large. Jesus did not only proclaim to be the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, but he actually laid down his life for them. There is a spurious sanctity which isolates men from the struggles of their age. Like the priests and Pharisees, who "went not into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled" and were unable to eat the Passover, some have allowed their mere proclamations and their worship to isolate them from the needs and the cares of men. So they were not found where, for example, decisions have to be taken and injustices opposed. A church absorbed in itself and its solemnities is not rightly representing to men the Christ, who, when on earth, walked life's common ways. He compared himself with a rural shepherd, the despised shepherd in the rabbinical tradition.

What then shall the church do to reach out both to its members and the world? The question can be put a different way. What can the church do to meet human needs? Rowland ironically sums up this in the following way:

Listen Christian.

I was hungry and you formed a humanities club
and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly
to your chapel in the cellar and prayed for my release.

I was naked and in your mind you debated
the morality of my appearance. I was sick and you
knelt and thanked God for your health. I was homeless
and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the
love of God. I was lonely and you left me alone to
pray for me.

You seem so holy; so close to God. But I am still
very hungry, and lonely and cold. Thank you.¹⁴

To profess a gospel of love without letting that gospel convict each one of us of sinful selfishness merely means that we still suffer from the illusion that our actions have been brought into conformity with the ideals we profess, when in reality our ideal merely obscures the ethically indifferent character of our motives. To really be a church, the church must reach out to others. Each of us, being a part of the church, must reach out. In reaching to the needs of others, the church cannot rule out the possibility of suffering. It is significant how the concept of the remnant in the Old Testament was conceived. We have this idea in the latter half of the book of Isaiah as the servant of God, who by suffering and obedience, should be the agent of God's saving works. In the book of Daniel, the purified Israel is depicted as a Son of Man in contrast to those pagan empires symbolized as beasts. In the New Testament, however, Jesus united in his mission these two conceptions. He, the Son of Man (glorified), was the

¹⁴ Bob Rowland, "Listen Christian," in Mary R. Ebinger, *Quiet Day, Open up Your Life* (Cincinnati: Board of Missions, United Methodist Church, 1972), p. 13.

suffering Servant of the Lord, the Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. He associated his "little flock," the church with his vocation. It was to them that he would give the kingdom, and they too were called "not be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give 'their' life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45; John 10:11, 15).

The church should realize then that Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, is not a theorist. Instead he gives an example in a practical fashion. Bonhoeffer says rightly that "when Christians are exposed to public insult, when they suffer and die for his sake, Christ takes on visible form in his church."¹⁵ In the synoptic parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd did not rest until he had found the lost sheep. The search obviously involves suffering, and indeed it was a matter of laying down his life for the search, the discovery, and the rescue of the sheep. We recall Rihbany's description of the sufferings of the shepherds in Syria.¹⁶ They wintered with their flock in the deep, rocky gorges of the Orient. The Syrian shepherds have to traverse a similar valley every day for the sake of their sheep. They have to fight wild beasts and "bear scars on their bodies"¹⁷ as marks of their unreserved and boundless devotion to their flocks. Jesus demands similar devotion, either in the form of care or suffering for the sheep, the flock, and

¹⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 196.

¹⁶See again Abraham N. Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (New York: Riverside Press, 1916), p. 309.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

the people of God.

The setting of the synoptic parable of the lost sheep is that earlier, Jesus was assailed for the company he keeps, the publicans and the so-called "sinners." After the parable, we could almost hear Jesus saying to his critics, "You say these 'sinners' are lost. Surely a lost man is more precious and demands a more urgent seeking than a lost sheep or lost coin, and his recovery gives a fuller joy. God sent me to seek the lost people." This is precisely the task of the Chief Shepherd; it is the same task he has committed to his church, then and now. The church exists on the fact that in it, Christ may do his work for men. The church represents him.

The church is expected to be the shepherd who is not timid or cowardly, but formidable and brave and is able to save the individual sheep and the whole flock from imminent and apparent dangers. We said in the last chapter that one of the purposes of the parable of the Good Shepherd is that we or the church may be imitators of Jesus. The Bible puts this in another way when it talks about the Christian's life in Christ, or, alternatively, their life in the Spirit. This means that the imitation of Christ should not take the form of an unimaginative repetition of the details of his earthly life like his parable of the Good Shepherd. But rather a life of love, care and devotion to Jesus and to his church, his flock and his sheep.

Heretofore, we have been stating the task of the church, to be that of shepherding the flock and the sheep. These sheep are those inside and outside the church as an institution. "And I have other

sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16). To state the church's task is also to confess the church's failure. The words of the pagan which Tertullian quoted ("see how these Christians love one another") has since been spoken more often in mockery than in admiration. The church, which claims so high a task and so rich a heritage, impresses men more by its spiritual poverty than by its spiritual wealth, while its demand for love and justice and leadership (i.e. shepherding) goes unheeded because of its failure to show in its own life the qualities which it demands from others. It speaks of the need of national and international cooperation (one flock, one shepherd) and is itself divided. To many its love seems but cold "charity" and its justice a pretext for maintaining the privileges of the prosperous. In our brief survey, we have had to record many Christian failures which seem to support this condemnation. The church's history has been marred by the lack of unity, the lack of the unanimous voice over pronouncements on issues of national and international concern, the lack of caring and shepherding God's flock, and the failure to heed his voice (John 10:16) leading to the loss of the sense of direction.

What is the result of all this? The church, which exists to manifest Christ to men, has sometimes seemed to hide him from their sight. The shepherd has turned out to be at best, a hireling and at the worst, a wolf. By many in the modern world, the church is regarded as effete and futile, and yet this church, of whose failure we hear so

often is, in spite of its divisions and other ills, the *Una Sancta*, the only holy church, whose essential ministry and pastoring is that of Christ in and through his people. This means that a total pessimistic view of the church cannot be right and to be sure, the history of the church itself does not justify this.

It is true that there are many who speak of Christ with reverence and profess to admire his teaching and yet despise the church. We remember Swinburne's words, "I could worship the Crucified if he came to me without his leperous bride, the church."¹⁸ In his allegory, Bunyan, with true Christian insight, includes among those who reach the celestial city not only Great-heart, Valiant-for-truth, Honest, Steadfast, but also Feeble-minded, Ready-to-halt, and Despondency with his daughter Much-afraid. The church still numbers among its members the counterpart of these genuine, though in some cases, feeble Christians.

The customary talk about the failure of the church makes the judgment of the great historian, Latourette, all the more significant. He tells us that in the three decades since 1914, there have been not years of failure but "ages of advance, but of advances through storm."¹⁹

Latourette continues:

There were what appeared to be startling losses. Yet in the main, in 1944, Christianity found itself in a stronger position than in 1914. Indeed, if one views, as one must, the world-wide story as a whole, it becomes clear that the thirty years which

¹⁸ Sydney Cave, *The Christian Way* (New York: Philosophic Library, 1949), p. 265.

¹⁹ K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), VII, 3.

followed 1914 constituted one of the greatest eras in the history of the church. . . . If mankind was surveyed as a whole, Christianity was clearly a growing factor in human affairs. Here in an age of storm was a power which, usually unnoticed and unappreciated by those whose self-function it was to interpret the day by day passage of events, was quietly at work, transforming individuals and societies, and more widely potent than ever before.²⁰

There is in a sense in which the church in 1972 can claim similar things as above. For example, the church in 1972 is in a stronger position that it was in, say, 1962. The fact that the church still stands as a witnessing symbol, in spite of denominational differences, is itself a glimpse of hope for a brighter future for the church.

That judgment, of course, gives ground for encouragement but not complacency. The church is the representative of Christ to the world. The church itself contains or should contain at least two of the main elements we have in John 10, the good shepherd and the sheep or the flock. We know that the church does not consist of saints; it consists of men and women who know they still stand in need of forgiveness. But "when the church ceases to respect saints and does not attempt to produce them, it has forgotten what it means to be a follower of Christ."²¹ The church exists that it may be used by Christ in his ministry of caring, shepherding and healing men. For the continuance of this ministry, the service of the whole church is required. This task, as we have indicated above, is not limited to the official or ordained ministry alone, that is, the pastor or the clergy. In some

²⁰*Ibid.*, VII, 410, 414, 415.

²¹G. F. Thomas, *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 203.

cases, he has to take the initiative and leadership. Also, the ministry is not restricted to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.

We are told in the synoptics and John that Jesus was going about preaching and healing people. When he sent his disciples, he also charged them first to go to the lost sheep of Israel, "to preach and to heal the sick" (Matt. 10:6-7). But before sending out the disciples, Jesus was concerned first and foremost with the helplessness and the need of the people (the sheep). Therefore, he "had compassion for them, because they were . . . like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). We recall again that it was the healing of the blind man in John 9 that leads to the discourse about the good shepherd in John 10. In other words, the man was healed because Jesus is the Good Shepherd. It is therefore the task of the clergy, the laity, and the whole church to care for the spiritual and bodily needs of not only the flock or the believers who have committed themselves to Jesus' keeping, but also the "outsiders," so that they also may be brought, "so there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is appropriate at this point to recapitulate what has been discussed in the substantive chapters in order to draw certain conclusions. In our study of the shepherd motif in the New Testament, we saw that in order to have a thorough understanding of this important concept, we need to trace back to known sources that may have influenced in one form or the other the concept we now have in the New Testament. The sources of influence are traceable to three main areas: the Greek, the Roman, and the Ancient Near East.

Some of the representations of the Good Shepherd found in later life of the church are practically identical with those of the pagan Orpheus. In Greek mythology, Orpheus himself was a shepherd who could charm the beasts and the birds with the music of his lyre. The Greek god Hermes was thought among other things as the lord of the flocks. These ideas were discussed in more detail in the introductory chapters, especially in Chapter II.

Also, we saw in the same chapter that the Greek philosophers like Plato and Socrates used the imagery of the shepherd or the "ideal" shepherd. Plato called the rulers the shepherds of the πόλις who must see to the well-being of their subjects as shepherds do to their animals. Socrates' idea is that the shepherd is concerned with providing what is best for that over which he is set, and this should be

the process to follow by any ruler.¹

The influence is more tangible in the religion of Ancient Near East, in Syria, Babylonia and Egypt. We observed that in Babylonia and Assyria, "shepherd" is a common epithet for rulers. In Egypt, the gods and kings were regarded as good shepherds. A full discussion of this is made in the latter part of Chapter II, to which further reference should be made.

The figure of the Good Shepherd carrying a sheep or a lamb became the most popular subject of early Roman Christian artists. From the second to the fourth century A.D., representations of Christ as the Good Shepherd abound in all forms of art on wall painting, sarcophagi, rings, metals and gold glass. Wright says that some of the earliest occurrences of this motif have been found in Rome and can be dated within one hundred to one hundred and fifty years from the time of Jesus' death.²

In the Old Testament introductory section, we saw a clear vision of God as the Shepherd of his people. This means that our Lord's words, "I am the Good Shepherd," carry on the same scriptural tradition. The Shepherd Psalm (Ps. 23) presents in perfect imagery and symbolizes this thought of God as our Shepherd. The closing words of Isaiah 40:1-11 are comforting ones for the exiled and are based on

¹Plato, *The Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), I, 65f. and chapter two of this dissertation.

²G. Ernest Wright, "The Good Shepherd," *Biblical Archaeologist*, II (December 1939), 46.

the shepherd/sheep imagery.

He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd,
He shall gather the lambs in his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that are with young.³

Then we have the passage from Ezekiel, which are words both of warning and encouragement. The prophet draws a distinction between the good and evil, the false and the true shepherd as Jesus does later in John 10 between the good shepherd and the hireling. Ezekiel declares, "Woe unto the shepherd of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the sheep?" (Ezek. 34:2). He goes on to say that, in the end, the Lord God himself will be the Shepherd of his people and will seek out His own sheep that are scattered abroad and feed them with good pasture. Some of the other passages that deal with the prophets, kings and other leaders as the shepherd are the following: II Samuel 5:2; I Chronicles 11:2; Psalm 78:71f.; Ezekiel 34; Jeremiah 2:8; 3:15; Isaiah 56:11; 63:11.

The two longest New Testament passages are both found in John 10, and 21 apart from the synoptic parable of the lost sheep. They were discussed in chapter three. The parable of the lost sheep with its emphasis on the recovery and rescue of the "lost" represented something entirely new in religious history which Jesus brought into the world. It sounded a fresh note to the worth of the individual in God's sight, however fallen and degraded. Also, it sets before us the ideal of Jesus' own ministry, which was "to seek and to save that

³Isaiah 40:11.

which was lost." He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

In Chapter IV, which is based on John 10, we saw Jesus as the Good Shepherd with a specific declaration, "I am the Good Shepherd." Jesus contrasts himself with the thieves, the robbers and the hirelings who care not for the welfare of the sheep. On the contrary, Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. This notion of the shepherd laying down his life for the sheep is also new and unique in comparison with what we discover from non-Christian and ancient religions and the Old Testament itself. However, according to John, Jesus' care for the sheep does not end in laying down his life for them, but he has power to take it up again so that he may give eternal life to the sheep. The implication of this is that Jesus becomes both the leader, the director, the shepherd, and the giver of everlasting life to his church. But ironically, the means by which this is possible is through death, the laying down of his life for the sheep. In John 21, where Jesus tenderly rebukes Peter, we saw how he gives to him at last the great commission, "Feed my lambs!" "Feed my sheep!" The Christian love which Jesus does not mention specifically in John 10, again rings into our ears here. It is significant that one thing about which Jesus questions Peter prior to commissioning him to tend the flock is love. This is the basic qualification for the Christian service. Other qualifications may be desirable but love is completely indispensable (cf. I Cor. 13:1-3).

Chapter V deals with how the concept persisted and succeeded

in entering and staying in the art and life of the church. The contemporary situation of the church is also brought into perspective on the basis of what Jesus as the Good Shepherd means for us today. The dual commission of leading and feeding referred to by Jesus in John 10 is the primary duty of the church as a whole. Every member of the church is called upon to be participants in it.

We have suggested that we cannot rule out completely the possibility of associating the Jesus of history rather than the Christ of faith with the parable in John 10. Nevertheless, the need and the situation of the church made the writing of the New Testament as a whole possible and necessary. The parable in John 10 cannot be different. The point we are trying to make is that it is not only the study or knowledge that "I am the Good Shepherd" per se that is important. The most important thing is what we do with this particular imagery. This compels us in closing to draw certain final conclusions based on our entire study of the shepherd/sheep motif in the New Testament.

With all meekness and lowliness of heart we are to come to Jesus, our "Chief Shepherd," and consider with him, as it were, how best we may be able to lead and feed those who are the "sheep of his pasture," the "flock of God" committed to our care. The church is called upon to think over in a new dimension the great responsibility laid upon her and act accordingly. In this connection, we may draw the following final conclusions which are actually the urgent tasks before the church. They are not exhaustive, but they are guidelines.

1. How may we help the little ones of his flock, those whom he takes in his arms, and carries in his bosom? The care of children, for example, and more meaningful provisions for youth activities in the church should top the list of the church's priorities now more than ever before. In the early days and up to about fifteen years ago, especially in Africa, all the schools were under the control of the church, and the religious or scriptural instructions were number one in the curriculum. Today, however, the situation is completely different. The government now controls all the schools, including the curriculum. The only avenue opened to the church for moral and spiritual nourishment of the youth is the church herself. This makes it more urgent for the church to give maximum encouragement to youth activities, Sunday schools, childrens' services, etc.

2. How may we carry on the personal pastoral work of leadership and nourishment of physical and spiritual needs of the flock which we are called upon to undertake for Christ's sake among all sorts and conditions of men and women? Here again the unity of the church comes in. It may not necessarily be the physical and organizational unity we often advocate, but the spiritual and cooperational unity of the church, whereby the sheep, "black or white," and even the goats, are cared for, nourished and led to the "green pasture." In John 10, Jesus says in effect that in the matter of caring for the sheep, as in other things, he and the Father are one. "No one shall snatch them [the sheep] out of my hand. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:28, 29).

3. We must have compassion for the multitudes, scattered abroad, "as sheep having no shepherd." This is urgent too, so that these "other sheep" may be brought and that there may be one flock, one shepherd. These "other sheep" are still all over the world and are still in the majority, but are tragically and universally neglected. The complacency of the church cannot be over-emphasized here. The church takes for granted that everybody everywhere has been led and brought under the umbrella of God and his Kingdom. This tendency or temptation is a common feature, especially in the so-called Christian nations of the world.

Are we ready then each one of us, as pastors or ministers of the Word of Life, and all other church men and women, to take Christ not only literally, but seriously? Then we will constantly go after the scattered flock, to bring them and feed them? Unless we do this, we are not following the example of Jesus, who himself is the Good Shepherd.

This last point of the "scattered flock" compels us to ask ourselves what we actually mean by the word "parish." Where are these "lost sheep," the scattered flock? The English word "parish" is a Latin-Greek derivation of the Greek word *paroikos*. *Par* means along side; *oikos* means house; the whole suggests dwelling beside or neighbor. Thus a parish, by definition, implies the combination of a place and people. A place need not, however, be restricted to an ecclesiastical district of Roman Catholicism. Also, a people need not mean the exclusive homogeneous grouping and activity of Protestantism, but it

ought to include individuals and groups from all walks of life. This is why we agree with Ashbrook's new definition of a parish meaning, "a peopled-place; a people and a place, a place and a people."⁴

Therefore, I am suggesting that the church in the future should be considered as a parish in this sense. What is the implication of this? It means that we must never be content with the small local area in which we live or minister, or the school in which we teach, or the office in which we work, as if that were our one narrow field of work. We must, as the true pastors or shepherds, think still further with our hearts full of compassion concerning those multitudes who are the outcast, as it were, among mankind and remain outside the loving care of any pastor or shepherd. Christ Jesus, we are told, came into the world "to seek and to save that which is lost," and there are countless millions of poor and distressed people today all over the world that need the Shepherd's care and have not found it.

This becomes more significant if we remember that it appears to have been these unshepherded multitudes that brought at last to its fulfillment in the mind of Christ the long and carefully prepared plan of sending forth his disciples to carry on his own work and thus extend its range. The thought seems to come to an abrupt close at the end of Matthew 9. But if we read the first verses of the following chapter 10 and also the parallel passage in Luke 6:12f., we can clearly gather

⁴James B. Ashbrook, "Paroikos: The Future Church," *Foundations*, XV:3 (July-September 1972), 205.

how it was; his care for the multitudes stirred his heart of love on that occasion and made him ready to take the next step by choosing his twelve apostles.

In this connection, there is a prevailing attitude, at least in some parts of Africa which should be discouraged with all the force that it demands. Some of the church hierarchies think and actually claim that the ordained priests or pastors who are not attached to a particular church, but work and minister in an institution like a school or college, are "not in the church" or parish. If the church, as we discussed earlier, is to become *paroikos*, a peopled-place, then this notion and claim cannot be right and must be discouraged. Ministering or pastoring in these institutions should be intensified by specifically allocating ordained pastors to these institutions with the full financial responsibility of the church. In this way, we would be able to shepherd and to nurture both adults and youths for Christ.

If the church of the future could manifest parish, *paroikos*, as a peopled-place, then surely the kingdoms of the world might become the Kingdom of the Lord who himself is the Good Shepherd, the "Chief Shepherd," the "Shepherd and Guardian of your souls." It is on behalf of these people everywhere that he as the Good Shepherd laid down his life that he may take it again in order to give them eternal life.

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